The WAY of

Good Men

FOR

WISE MEN

To Walk in.

OR,

ANIMADVERSIONS

UPON

Prov. 2. 20. comp. with *v.* 10, 11, 12.

IN A

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

ETHICUS, a Man for Customs, though derived from the Heathen:

AND

LOGICUS, a Man for Right Reason, guided by the Word of God.

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The WAY of Good Men FOR WISE MEN To Walk in, &c.

Ethicus.

OH Friend! you are the man whom I have long desired to speak with.

Logicus. Here now you have me: what is't you would say?

Eth. I am glad to see you are well, but am sorry to hear what you do.

Log. What's that friend, that I may be sorry too, if there be cause?

Eth. Why! I hear you declare your ſelf againſt thoſe things that you have formerly promoted and owned. I mean, you have left off being a *Son of the Church*, whereof you were formerly a zealous Member.

Log. To *change* our minds and practices, if it be for the *better*, is no ſuch uncouth thing. *Paul* the Apoſtle is an Authentick example, who from a Perſecutor became a Preacher of the Goſpel. And indeeed 'tis agreeable to mans *finite underſtanding*, much more to mans *corrupted nature*, ſometime to convert, and turn from what he was. But to your particular charge: I was indeed (according to my education, and youthful meaſure of underſtanding zealous, as young, for the cuſtoms received by Tradition from our Fathers; and was forward enough to talk (perhaps more than came to my ſhare) in approving and condemning things I little underſtood. But theſe were childiſh doings, which when I became a man, it was high time to put away from me. I would, and ſhould be *now* wiſe unto Sobriety, and guided by Reaſon, rectified by the Word and Spirit of God; not moved or ſhaken by words of Vanity, the *Canting Language* that ſome men greatly affect. Truly (friend) there are a great many fallacious words now in uſe; *Fathers of the Church, Sons of the Church, the Temple, the Temple of the Lord are theſe*, &c. And on the other hand, *Schiſmatick, Faction, Phanatick*,

Phanatick, &c. All which signifies just so much, and no more, than as the Bell tinketh; the merit of the cause is no ways decided by them.

Eth. Good lack! I wonder how you came by all this Wisdom, to discover the error of your former ways: I would fain know how you came to be so much *illuminated.*

Log. Illuminated is another *Canting* Scoff. I pretend not to Euthusiasme, but in the *ordinary* methods that reasonable creatures are dealt withal, I came at last to see I was mistaken.

Eth. Pray let us understand these methods you speak of.

Log. Be your desire of satisfaction herein curious, captious, or sincere, I am ready to render a reason of the faith that is in me to you, or any man that shall require it of me.

Eth. Nay friend, do not take my request amiss, for I profess my self willing to understand where the truth lies, and *charitably* would lend a hand to help you out of *your mistakes*, or *conscientiously* stretch it forth to be helped out of *my own.*

Log. Well then, if these be your thoughts, I am encouraged to give you a true account of the way how my mind came to be altered. You know I had the benefit of a *sober education*, so that lying, swearing, drinking, lasciviousness,

viouſneſs, ſcoffing at Religion, *&c.* might eaſily appear to be *evil things*, and thoſe who lived in the common, known, and allowed practice of them, to be *evil men*. With this good foundation and premunition I went abroad into the world, being fledg'd with an Age ſufficient to give me diſcretion capable of obſerving men and things. My firſt pitching-place was at a conſiderable diſtance from that of my birth and breeding, where I found men of both perſwaſions; and (being all ſtrangers to me) you may well think, my firſt familiarity was with thoſe of my own mind: With moſt of the feather I grew ſoon acquainted, and (to ſay truth) was almoſt as ſoon weary of their company; for I found ſuch *vicious inclinations in the moſt* of them, that I could not ſatisfie my ſelf in their ſociety. This was *one* reaſon why I was willing to remove to another place, at good diſtance, and begin the world again, promiſing my ſelf, that there I ſhould find men of my own mind, which were of a more ſober converſation; but in this alſo I was deceived, as to the *generality* of them. There I continued ſome years, and had opportunity, not only of free converſe with *Secular* men of both perſwaſions, but to hear alſo *Preachers* of different Judgments in Church-matters. But (really friend) I there alſo obſerved ſo much immorality, rudeneſs and idleneſs amongſt thoſe of my own opinion; and

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on the contrary, so much honesty, sobriety and diligence in outward appearance (and I could see no farther) amongst the others, that I was grievously stumbled and confounded at that *Problem*, how it came to pass, that the *worse men* should have the *better cause*; and on the other hand, the *worse cause* (for so I then judged it) should have the *better men*. Out of this difficulty I could not extricate my self, till sometime after I met with a discourse (whither first in conference, or some book, I do not well remember) on that, *Prov.* 2. 20. compared with *v.* 10, 11, 12.

V. 10. *When wisdom entreth into thine heart, and understanding is pleasant unto thy soul.*

11. *Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.*

12. *To deliver thee from the way of evil men, from the man that speaketh froward things, &c.*

20. *That thou maist walk in the way of good men, to keep the paths of the righteous.*

This discourse at first gave me a shrewd *suspition*, that there was more in the matter than I yet knew; this opened mine ears to instruction, and made me willing to read something of the controversies. *Audire literam partem.*

which before I utterly refused to do. On this enquiry I found, that when the *prejudice of education* was removed, there was reason enough for the change both of my judgment and practice. And thus I have given you a short account, how I came to be altered from what I was.

Eth. This account shews me the force of prejudice, for you laid down *one prejudice* and took up *another*; and so swinged from side to side, *prejudice* being the chief bias of both.

Log. No friend, you are mistaken, I think, and that in a matter which deserves a cautious consideration. The word *prejudice* is often very improperly and fallaciously applied; as when a regret at persons or things for manifest evil, and with the greatest reason is called a *prejudice*; so also, when even that advantage, and benefit of a mans education, by some is perversly and unthankfully stiled *prejudice*; and so you may say, that I by a sober breeding was *prejudiced* against lying, swearing, drunkenness, &c. whereas indeed *prejudice* (to speak properly) does always connote an *evil* in the *former* impressions, and not any thing that is absolutely or comparatively good: therefore the true notion of *prejudice* is a fore-stalling of a mans judgment and affections, whereby he is prevented and hindred from admitting what is reasonable, but to have the *judgment satisfied by an argument*, and

and the *affections* raised and governed by *reason*, cannot be called *prejudice*; and such I think was my perswasion, arising from the consideration of the *men* that were chief abettors of a *way* that was under question. *Education* and *custom*, if there be *defects* in them, may indeed beget a *prejudice*; but a good solid *argument*, well considered, may remove it: and such a one I take this to be, that is drawn from *Prov.* 2. 20. before mentioned.

Eth. I confess, I do not see the very great force of it.

Leg. If you will give me leave, I think I can shew you from it, not only *enough to excuse my self*, but to *convince you too*, unless (with the deaf Adder) you will stop your ears, and not suffer your self to be plainly informed.

Eth. Nay Sir, pray take me not for such a one, as would *wilfully reject truth*; no, rather (so far as I understand my own heart) I am *willing to be taught* any thing that I know not, and to *do* what I shall know to be my duty. I judge it well resolved by *Israel* (had they stuck to their profession) *All that the Lord shall say, that will we hear and do*, Deut. 5. 27.

Leg. Very good: and if so, the next enquiry is, what is *truth?* what is *duty?* And indeed in these questions, there need be a serious and humble diligence; the rather, for that

that they are often *hid* from mens understandings, and that sometimes by *God*, and sometimes by *Men*.

By *God*, either through *Soveraignty*, as when he revealed to babes what he hid from the wise and prudent, *Matt.* 11. 25. *Even so father, for so it seemeth good in thine eyes:* or else *judicially*, if men *will not* see where to they *may*, they *shall not* where they *need*: so Christ said concerning *Jerusalem*, Thou hadst Prophets to teach thee the things belonging to thy peace, but *now they are hid from thine eyes. Make the heart of this people fat*; and the like of the Heathen Philosophers, *Rom.* 1. 10. who as they did *not like to retain God in their knowledg*, so *God gave them up to a reprobate mind.* v. 28. They had, indeed many of them, *Wise heads*, but their *foolish heart was darkened*, v. 21. and much more to this purpose. So dreadful a thing it is to dispise the day of Grace, and suppress the notions we have, or may have of divine truths. This from God.

2. From *Men*, obscuring and casting mists of false reasonings over truth and errour, duty and sin; spoiling men by *vain Philosophy*; call'd *vain*, not to disparage true reasonings, or a diligent search into the knowledg of Gods works; but to signifie an empty shew of learning, imployed to palliate falshood, and cast contempt upon divine truths. Hereby the

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ny do trouble mens minds, whom yet they cannot satisfie; and puzzel their consciences only with design to bring them to an implicite faith, and blind obedience; for if hereby *Diotrephian* spirits, who have a mind to Lord it over Gods Heritage, can but make men begin to think, that *Gospel-simplicity* is a mean thing; the Rule of *Gods Word* is *insufficient*, the *guidance of his Spirit thereby* is but *concealed Enthusiasm*, and their *own judgements of discretion* nothing worth, because they skill not these entangling School-notions; They thus attempt to put out their eyes, to make and have them blind, ready to be led by their blind guides, till they both fall into the ditch.

Eth. But how should unlearned men do, if they do not take up many things upon trust? for in many controversies it is most certain, unlearned men cannot resolve themselves; no, nor so much as understand the arguments and distinctions used, when they are laid before them. Now here I think it is necessary for them to *believe* what the *Church* teaches, and *do* all that their *Reverend Divines* do bid them.

Leg. The words [*Church, and Reverend Divines*] (as they are æquivocally abused) are grand cheats. Every good Christian will grant, that the *true Church* is to be heard, and *real Divines* are Reverend, and their feet beautiful;

beautiful: But then this *Church* must be of Christs *institution*, and those *Divines* of *his mission*, and both teaching *according to Gods Word*, which our *judgment of discretion* must apprehend and judg of. But if *Church* signifie a pack of combining men, who would have Religion truckle under politick designs, and project only to keep themselves up high in the world, claiming to themselves undue priviledges, to others unjust prejudice; their voice is the voice of a stranger, which the Sheep of Christ neither *will*, nor *ought* to hear.

So if by *Reverend Divines* be only meant men of affected gravity in an Ecclesiastical habit, and proudly assuming a dignity from some outward worldly preferments, or the titular honour of highest Accademical degrees, where there is indeed little inward worth, or real love to God, or true Religion: such *Reverend Divines* are another sort of animals in Sheeps clothing, that gape for their gain from their quarters, and wear rough garments to deceive; these are to be fled from, rather than heard, and their decision of controversies is but the imposing of fallacies upon credulous and unwary men. An example of all this may be the *Antichrist* and his Popish Clergy, who have so long deceived the Nations, and led them to perdition and destruction, still under the specious names of the *Catholick Church*, *Mother Church*, *Doctors of the Church*,

Church, and Right Reverend Fathers in God *&c.*

Eth. Well, but let the Pope go as he is; what if the Church and Reverend Parſons be really ſuch, what then?

Log. Why then, hear them as was ſaid before; but then they will certainly teach *according to Gods written word*, whereby we muſt try both them, their miſſion and their Doctrine. Propoſe then to your ſelf that *word* as the great ſtanding and ſufficient Rule to walk by. *To the law and to the teſtimony. Search the ſcriptures, for in them ye think* (and ye think rightly, being convinced of a truth) *to have eternal life.* And if *any ſpeak not according to this word, what wiſdom is in them? Try all things, hold faſt that which is good.* And many more ſuch places might be mentioned.

Eth Oh but this Rule is ſometimes difficult. elſe how are there ſo many controverſies on foot among thoſe who own the ſufficiency of Scripture againſt the Doctrine of Papiſts?

Log. Some *Dogmatically* hold the Scriptures ſufficiency, who yet *practically* deny it; elſe why is there ſo much to do about humane contrivance in Religious matters, where the Warrant from Scripture cannot be cleared? and therefore in truth, *men are not ſo well agreed* about this point as you may think.

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But now as to the *difficulties* you ſpeak of: ſurely *foundation-truths* are manifeſt enough to anythat will uſe diligence in the ſtudy of the Scriptures, and good attention to the plain Preaching of the Goſpel, ſo as they may hold the head, and ſafely arrive to happineſs. But as to *Circumſtantials*, both in diſcipline and worſhip, or any thing elſe that may relate to *practice*, there are many difficulties and controverſies may ariſe, which though they are not about fundamentals, yet are not to be neglected; for this is obſervable, that thoſe who teach and practice erroneouſly in theſe things, do (for the moſt part) undermine Religion, nibble at the roots thereof, and diſtroy its heart, life, or power. This we may ſee in the Popiſh Ceremonies, and Rites received from the Heathens, which are really of no other uſe, than to ſerve their worldly intereſts, and turn Religion into formality.

Eth. Well, but how ſhall we be reſolved about theſe difficulties, ſeeing you ſay, *they are not to be neglected?* we know circumſtances do ſometimes ſo vary actions, that we cannot tell how to apply the rules to them; nor does (I think) the Rule reach every particular caſe, unleſs we ſometimes draw conſequences by Analogy, proportion and ſimilitude, which every Chriſtian is not skill'd to do; and therefore herein muſt be a *deference to the judgment of the learned.*

Leg.

Log. But it will be as hard for this unskilled man to judg who are most learned; and if he guesses by reputations of men, or by dignities and promotions, whereby men are made illustrious, he will find, that men of as good repute will be otherwise minded, and may see among the vanities under the Sun, that very often the *race is not to the swift, nor the battel to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill*, Eccles. 9. 11. So that he will be at a loss still. Now, I think, in such cases, direction may rather be taken from the Holy Ghost in this Scripture. He may better judg of the *Way of Good Men*, than of the skill of the learned, and *that way* will prove an excellent *comment* on the *Scripture-Rule*: and this I take to be the scope of the Text, which will appear, if we reflect upon the general design of the Chapter.

Eth. Pray give me (if you please) the Analysis of the whole context; for I would willingly see how this Text doth resolve difficulties, and decide controversies.

Log. Well then: here are first to be noted in the Chapt. an Exhortation, Directions and Promises.

1. The Exhortation is (implyed) to the study of wisdom. Now by wisdom in this book, is understood, sometimes the essential Wisdom of God, *i. e.* the Lord Jesus Christ, sometimes

sometimes derivative grace, the same that is called, fear of the Lord, knowledg of God, *v.* 5. and the finding and understanding of them. This is it which is here meant, and is attainable with great diligence, proposed in

2. The Directions (expressed) *v.* 1. &c. given by degrees. 1. Receive words. 2. Hide them, *v.* 1. 3. Let them operate upon the heart, *v.* 2. All which signifie our utmost endeavours in our selves. And because all may be ineffectual, if we rest in our own performances; therefore he farther directs us to *pray* for Gods help, and the influence of his Spirit, *v.* 3. Now as this concerns the matter of our endeavours both with God and our selves, so the next *verse* shews the *manner* of our proceeding in both; which must be very earnest, as men seek after Silver and hid Treasure. To this we are quickened by

3. The *Promises*, in certain concatenated or depending Ranks.

First, You shall find wisdom; upon such endeavours you shall not lose your labour, *v.* 5. And that you may think this a considerable promise, know

Secondly, That wisdom shall be very beneficial to you, to *direct* you here, and to bring you to happiness hereafter.

1. To direct you here to avoid *sin*, and to do *duty*, both set forth by the *examples* which men

men do follow, and the *Company* which they keep in them. It therefore guides us to *avoid* the *evil*, both men, *v.* 12, *&c.* and women, *v.* 16, *&c.* and to *accompany* and *imitate good men*, *v.* 20.

2. And after we have walked in this good way with good men, he promiſeth, it ſhall bring us to happineſs, *v.* 21. Where Spiritual and Eternal mercies (according to the Pedagogie of thoſe times) are couched under temporal promiſes (of dwelling in the land) and this the more commended by compariſon with the ſtate of the wicked, *v.* 22. *But the wicked ſhall be cut off, and utterly rooted out of it.*

This is the general ſcope of the Chapter, whereof the 20*th v.* is that which I ſhall (if you pleaſe) ſpeak a little more particularly to.

Eth. I pray do, for I do not yet perceive the ſtrength of your argument from *the way of good men.*

Log. The thing I am to clear, is what may be contained in this Doctninal point, that *Godly wiſdom directs men to walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.* To manifeſt the inference wherof, the words of the text may be explained. *Firſt* Diſjunctively, *&c.* then Collectively.

1. *Disjunctively*, thus,

Walk and *keep*] Notes continuance and perſeverance; *walking* is a ſeries of ſteps, a courſe of actions; and *keeping*, a holding faſt, notwithſtanding diverſions, diſſwaſions, or diſcouragements.

Way and *paths*] Note good mens conſtant courſe, their general manner of living (not their *deviations*, turning a ſide out of their way; nor their *deſiſtencies*, weak reſtings and fainting in their duty, through the remainder of corruptions): But it is that, which in the equability of their minds, and greateſt freedom from temptations, they do, with full approbation and comfort, chuſe before any other way.

Good men, righteous] Signifies, not *one*, or *ſome*, but the generality of ſuch; not perfectly, or abſolutely righteous (for ſuch there are not on this ſide Heaven), but *ſincerely* ſo, and *comparatively* too, with the moſt of other men; Both appearing ſuch to the judgment of a charitable prudence and diſcretion. And thus I explain the words Disjunctively. Now

2. *Collectively*, Walking and keeping, in the way and paths of ſuch good and righteous men, imports,

1. *Company*, Society, and delighting to be with them; as on the other hand, ſhunning out of Conſcience all wicked men, who may beguile or pollute us,

2. *Imi-*

2. *Imitation*, following them in their good ways, and therein doing as they do.

This explication of the words, be pleaſed to keep in mind, for I ſuppoſe we ſhall have occaſion to reflect upon it, in anſwering ſome Objections, which perhaps you may make.

Eth. I think indeed I ſhall make ſome Objections; for methinks I find divers things already ariſing in my mind.

Log. Very likely: But I pray forbear a little, till I have ſhewed you the concurrence of ſome other Scriptures, with the general ſcope of theſe words.

Eth. What need that? I know you hold the authority of any one Scripture enough to enforce a duty, and over-rule the Conſcience, if the ſenſe of it be clear.

Log. Right: But then the ſenſe of it will be more manifeſt, when God teaches the ſame thing in other places; nor is it needleſs, that he ſo does; for the deceitfulneſs of our hearts is ſuch, that Conſcience is apt to ſhift and ſlip beſide the edg of one word, unleſs there be more to meet with it; but a manifold Cord is not eaſily broken. What is ſaid of conſenting Preaches, may be applied to conſenting Scriptures, 1 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. which when men hear (unleſs their hearts be hardened), they are convinced of all, they are judged of all, and ſo the thoughts of their heart (about ſome ſinful courſe, which perhaps they are

unwilling to part with) are made manifeſt, and they will be forced to fall down and worſhip God, ſaying, This is of a truth the mind of God.

Eth. Well, I pray proceed in your own method.

Log. Firſt then, Let us conſider ſome Scriptures that concern the calling of the *Gentiles*, and reſtauration of the *Jews*; in which, ſociety and mutual invitation, is ſo ſet forth, as if there were no going to true Goſpel Faith and Worſhip, but in company with other good men. Such is that *Iſa.* 2. 2, 3. 5. (the ſame with *Mich.* 4. 1, *&c.*) wherein after the promiſe of advancing Chriſts Spiritual Kingdom, *v.* 2. the acceſs thereunto, is by Companies, calling one upon another, *Come ye, and let us go up*, &c. So *v.* 5. *Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.* Now what do theſe Invitations ſignifie, but that all who are faithful and obedient, ſhall hearken to them, comply with them, and joyn themſelves unto the Lords people? So *Jer.* 3. 15, 17, 18. In *v.* 15. is a promiſe of faithful Miniſters, and a happy ſucceſs of their labours, *They ſhall feed you with knowledg and underſtanding.* The conſequence of which, is, the *Jews* forſaking their Ritual and Ceremonial Worſhip, *v.* 16. and the *Gentiles*, the *imaginations of their evil heart* (*i. e.* their Idolatrous Superſtitions), and they ſhall both *joyn* as one people

ple of the Lord, *v.* 17. Then the Schiſm between *Judah* and *Jeruſalem* ſhall ceaſe, and they ſhall *come together* to Gods true Worſhip, and their own happineſs, *v.* 18. So *Zach.* 8. 21, 23. *Let us go ſpeedily to pray before the Lord*: Thus ſay the Inhabitants of one City to thoſe of another, *I will go alſo*, *v* 21, and *v.* 23. Ten of the *Gentiles* ſhall take hold of the skirt of a *Jew*, ſaying, *We will go with you, for we have heard, that God is with you.* God is with his people, and they that will walk with him, muſt walk with them. One place more, and that is *Hoſea* 14. 9. *Who is wiſe? and he ſhall underſtand theſe things; prudent, and he ſhall know them: for the ways of the Lord ars right, and the juſt ſhall walk in them.* The ways of the Lord are good mens walks, and wiſdom and prudence enabling us to obſerve it, cannot but direct us into their bleſſed Company.

Here the general reaſons of our Doctrine might be added to theſe teſtimonies, *viz.* That wiſdom and prudence direct us how we may be *freee* from *ſin* and *miſery*, and how we may *attain holineſs* and *happineſs*; all which are the very end of good mens ways, and therefore wiſdom does point them out unto us. Of theſe things we may ſay ſomething more anon: But firſt, let me hear what you have to ſay againſt this Doctrine in general, and the proof thereof.

Eth. I say this seems to be a *factious* setting up of parties in the world, by putting such difference between men, calling some good men, the godly party, *&c.* in the mean while what must all the rest be, but wicked, naught, and wholly to be avoided?

Log. Nay, rather on the contrary, it *takes away factions*; for if all men would be good, as they ought to be, and joyn with good men, as they ought to do, then what would become of parties? But in case wicked men will not be perswaded hereunto, and there must still be parties; then it tends to weaken the worst Faction, and may by degrees root it out; because no man can have a mind to be reckoned among the worst, even a Thief pursued leaves his Crew, and thrusts himself into the Company of better reputed. Besides (friend), this Doctrine sets not up parties which are not; for there is, and will be such a difference of good and bad, though we take no notice of it. The word throughout declares it, and yet cannot be charg'd with making Factions; No, no; there are assuredly, and will be *Flocks of Christs Sheep*, that hear his voice, and *Heards of Goats and Swine*, filled with Lusts, and possessed with Devils. These are *here* sufficiently *destinguished*, and will be fully *hereafter separated*.

Eth. But you may be mistaken in your Saints, your good men; for deceivers may arise,

ariſe who will *ſeduce* even the Elect, *Mark* 13. 22.

Log. If it were poſſible, ſays the Text; for God ſecures his Elect from ſeduction, and therefore 'tis impoſſible. They may indeed be miſtaken in part, and for a time, but not totally and finally, in matters of greateſt importance. Nor can ſuch an inſinuating hypocrite ſeduce to manifeſt wickedneſs, but his Vizard of ſanctity will (*ipſo facto*) immediately fall off, and then he will appear more odious to every gracious heart.

Eth. I know indeed, ſome of your nicer people pretend to a Spirit of diſcerning, ſo that a hypocrite, they think, cannot eſcape them, when perhaps in the mean while they themſelves are the greateſt hypocrites.

Log. If any have a diſcerning Spirit, it is no other than the Spirit of God, guiding their ſanctified Reaſons by the word: If any pretend otherwiſe to judg of men, I ſhall allow it to be fond *Enthuſiaſm*, and their pretence vain hypocriſie, as you ſay, *Eccleſia non judicat de inviſibilibus*, Neither the Church nor any of its genuine Members, do judg of things inviſible: this were to ſtep into Gods Throne. Nor truly need any look for better marks of men than the Scriptures do afford; *Good* and *bad* Trees are known by their Fruits; *profane* men be ſure are eaſily enough diſtinguiſhed; yea and *hypocrites* too, if we attend

unto the word. Does the hypocrite *pray continually?* Job 27. 8, 10. does he *always* call upon God? There's one mark: Hypocriſie holds not on in good ways. Now you may remember in the explication, 'tis the good mens *way*, and not the *by-ſteps* of pretenders, that we ſhould have regard unto. The Word of God is a light to diſcover the moſt concealed works of darkneſs, 1 *John* 2. 19. therefore hypocrites ſhun this light, whereas ſincere ſouls can boldly ſay (with the Apoſtle), *We are made manifeſt to God, and in your conſciences*, 2 Cor. 5. 11.

But here (friend), while we ſpeak of hypocrites, let me caution you of one great wickedneſs, that too many are guilty of; which is, to account, and call *all profeſſion* of more ſeriouſneſs in Religion, or at leaſt, the generallity of it, *hypocriſie*: as if there were indeed, no ſincere *piety* towards *God*, *honeſty* towards *men*, or *ſobriety* in reſpect to *themſelves*; This conceit is not only diſhonourable to God and Religion, but a grievous injury even to mankind. And it is here obſervable, with admiration, that thoſe very perſons, who charge others with uncharitable cenſoriouſneſs, for accounting, or calling *a Spade, a Spade*; I mean, for judging of the preſent ſtate of wicked men by their wicked lives, will yet take upon them to declare heart-ſins (ſuch as hypocriſie), where nothing

but

but what is good doth appear in mens lives and converſations.

Eth. But ſuppoſe wicked men are diſtinguiſhable, as you ſay; yet I do not ſee, but they may go on in the way of Religion, together with better men; and the Scripture ſeems to allow them, to grow together in the Field of the Church: So then there will be but *one way* of good and bad men; and where then is the diſtinguiſhing choice you ſpeak of? where is *the way of good men*?

Log. Though in ſome common things of moral and political concerns, they may concur, as members of the ſame polity, for the preſervation (in ſome meaſure) of the whole, and for the common good; as for inſtance, moſt men (be they religious or not) do agree that Murtherers and Thieves, *&c.* muſt be puniſhed, elſe no Lives or Eſtates could be ſecure: maintaining propriety, every one is for, and common Juſtice betwixt man and man. But yet if once we come to things of a *divine concern*, true and ſpiritual worſhip of God, and opinions leading thereunto; as alſo concerning ſin and duty, in ſome queſtionable practices, which do not ſo immediately reſpect the whole Society of men: in theſe things you will find them as Curds and Whay, run a part, or as Water and Oyl, hardly, or never mingle together. If in caſe a hypocrite creeps in amongſt a ſober party, he will

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(as was ſaid) be diſcovered, and diſcharged in due time.

Now for that Scripture, *Let both grow together*, it is not to be underſtood as if publick Church-Diſcipline were to be wholly neglected, or private Chriſtian care to avoid a ſcandalous perſon, called a brother, to be utterly laid aſide; but only calls to moderation in Cenſures, leſt through raſhneſs the Wheat be plucked up alſo. However, if Tares ſhelter themſelves among the Wheat, this warrants not any, who would be accounted Wheat, to immerſe themſelves among the Tares.

Eth. But has not this a ſavour of the *Donatiſts* Separation? or of thoſe, who ſaid, *Stand off, I am holier than thou, Iſa.* 65. 5. a people whom (howſoever highly they thought of themſelves, yet) God deſpiſes, and calls them *a ſtink in his noſtrils?* Of this ſort they ſeem to be, who call themſelves and theirs, *the godly party.*

Log. The Separation here implied, and pleaded for, is only Separation from the evil of men, and from the men themſelves, with reſpect thereunto; that is, leſt we be made partakers of their evil, or harden them, or offend and endanger others. Thus it is neceſſary duty to avoid the way of evil men, and by conſequence the men perſiſting in that way. But 'tis not the way of good men, proudly

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to contemn others, and be conceited of themſelves (as thoſe in the Text you mention); 'tis rather to walk humbly, both with their God, and towards all men. And yet I pray miſtake not, as if it were blameable to judg thoſe godly (or the godly) with whom we joyn; Elſe, how ſhall we walk in the way of good men, unleſs we judg them good men with whom we walk? Reflect again on that place, *Come let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord*: that is (as I take it), the Lords people, and the Lords worſhip and ſervice performed by them; what elſe can be the meaning of it? Add hereunto, that ſurely he muſt be of a very profligate mind, who calls himſelf, and his party (to uſe your Phraſe), the ungodly party; who joyns to, and follows thoſe, whom he profeſſes he knows to be evil men, wicked and ungodly.

Eth Surely (for all what you ſay) there is ſome Society to be afforded even to wicked men; was not our Saviour a Companion of *Publicans* and *Sinners*? he ſeemed to be more ſociable than you would allow men to be.

Log. Our Saviour was no Companion of ſuch, though he often *was* in their Company: He was among them as a Phyſician, to heal them; and ſo may his faithful Miniſters or Diſciples, when Chriſtian prudence ſhews them a call. A good Chriſtian may, and ought to afford, even wicked men ſuch Society,

ety, as Relation, civil Neighbourhood, Neceſſity, or Charity do require. But what is this to walking in their way? needleſs familiarity with them? or ſinful intimacy? or ſetting them as our patterns to walk by, as if their darkneſs were a light? which are the things condemned.

Eth. Well, be it as you ſay: yet I think every one will be ready to plead, *I follow good men*, at leaſt in the things that concern Gods ſervice. Are there not good men of ſeveral judgments and practices? It may be you have good men of your way, and ſo have we of ours; 'twere uncharitable to judg otherwiſe. Now when good men go ſeveral ways, which is the way of good men? Surely this Rule muſt be very uncertain, eſpecially ſince every one will be apt to judg well of their own people.

Log. If men will deceive themſelves in their judging, who can help it? But truly every one cannot, with a hand on their heart, ſay ſo; ſome mens ways are manifeſtly wicked in their own and others eyes; Immoralities can with no ſenſe be called good; but as to the diverſity of the minds and ways of good men, truly ſo called, I pray remember what was before noted [Not the way of *one*, or a *few* good men is intended, but of the *generality*]. This Clue I muſt deſire you to carry throughout all our diſcourſe: Remember alſo,

ſo, 'tis the *way* of ſuch, and not their deviations; and yet again, that this *way*, or common practiſe of the *generality* of good men, muſt be taken as *a comment on the Rule* (which Rule is Gods Word) and not for any particular good mens weakneſſes, under temptation, or practices againſt the Rule. Theſe things remembred, I am ſure you will not find ſuch diverſity in the opinions and practices of good men.

Eth. But all this notwithſtanding, it ſeems to be but a popular argument *adcaptandum vulgus*: there is no force in it, only a *plauſibity*, or if you will, a *pobability* at beſt. For even a generality of good men, are men, and fallible ſtill, and ſo may be deceived; it has but the force of a *humane Teſtimony*, which is the weakeſt of all proofs.

Log. It is indeed a *popular* argument, and ſuch as the weakeſt may underſtand; 'tis a guide to the blind, a ſtaff to the weak: men that cannot much diſpute, may yet without doubt or controverſie, hereby learn what they may ſafely do. And this is its high commendation, or plauſibility, if you will ſo call it; but that it wants *force*, is denied; if it have but *probability*, as you ſay, is not that ſufficient to remove *doubt*, and beget *opinion*? and is not that *opinion* warrant enough for practice? What you ſay of the weakneſs of *humane Teſtimony*, is not univerſally true; for there are humane Teſti-

Teſtimonies ſo circumſtantiated, that they become *indubitable*, though not *infallible*; as for inſtance, that there were ſuch men as *Alexander* and *Cæſar*, that there are ſuch Cities as *Paris* and *Rome*, I *undoubtedly* know, though I never ſaw either the one, or other.

Eth. This is true; but how ſhall I know, when a humane Teſtimony is ſo circumſtantiated, as to be dubitable or indubitable?

Log. 'Tis dubitable and weak, when there is ſome ground to ſuſpect, that the perſon witneſſing is deceived, or a deceiver; yea, there is ſome weakneſs, when we have not a probability, that he is neither the one nor the other. But on the other hand, it is moſt indubitable, and certain, when we have many reaſons to perſwade us, that the witneſſes are true men, and ſpeak knowingly, eſpecially where there is a general concurrence of ſuch men in their Teſtimony; yea, and yet more firm, when they bear Teſtimony to ſuch things as have ſufficient Evidence otherwiſe, eſpecially where things are confirmed by the Truth of God, and have concurrent Teſtimonies of the Scripture.

Eth. What need Humane Teſtimony be added to Divine?

Log. None at all to confirm Truth, but to give evidence, and make the Truth more known. Of this nature is the Churches Teſtimony, when it is called, the *pillar and ground of Truth*: 'tis

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to be underſtood in a Forinſick ſenſe, as a pillar in the Market-place, upon which an Edict is hung up, for publick notice, gives not Authority to the Law (that's from the Magiſtrate), but only ſerves for promulgation. So alſo the ſufferers for the Goſpel of Chriſt are called, μαρτυρες (Martyrs), Witneſſes, not to confirm the Truth in it ſelf, but only to hand it over as true and good to our acceptance, as a thing worth maintaining with our lives. And ſo here, the way of good men, makes it not good, becauſe it is *their* way, but only (as a comment on the Rule) ſhews us, in example, what is required by precept. Now that *one*, or a *few* good men may be miſtaken, is eaſie to grant, but it is not eaſie to conceive, that the *generality* of them ſhould be ſo; for though they are all fallible men, yet they have very great advantages to underſtand Truth more than any other.

Eth. What are thoſe I pray?

Log. Suppoſing them to have equal natural parts, and equal improving opportunities with others———

Eth. Nay, pray ſtay a little; I think they have neither: not the parts; for we commonly ſee men lewdly diſpoſed to have admirable parts, beyond the common ſize; not the opportunities of improvement; for the other have a larger extent of converſation, even with ſome, whom perhaps, your good men

woud

would conſcientiouſly avoid: Now this converſation is more improving than your private contemplations.

Log. I think you are in both miſtaken; for moſt of the Debauchees, whoſe Wit is admired, have not really more Wit than others, but more boldneſs and oſtentation to ſhew what they have: Beſide, they take a liberty to ſcoff and jeer at ſuch perſons, and things, and in ſuch manner, as a good man would ſtudiouſly avoid. But what is this Wit to ſober Wiſdom? Again, as to their improvement; if you mind it well, you'l find it but a ſuperficial buſineſs, and a bare aptneſs to continue on in a fruitleſs and impertinent Company-keeping, whereby if any notions be gotten, they are not concocted, nor will they compenſate the loſs which otherwiſe accrews unto them. The truth is, many wicked perſons have good natural parts, and 'twill be their greater fault, that they put them not to the beſt uſe; but to ſay, that generally they are ſo, and the others otherwiſe, is to lay a moſt unworthy and grievous imputation upon all Religion and Honeſty, as if they were ſuch ſilly things, as no man of Wit or Breeding would meddle with them.

Eth. I could ſay, for diſcourſe ſake, *God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world*; but I foreſee, your anſwer will be the next words, *To confound the wiſe.* I underſtand the ſcope

of

of the place, that Gods Wiſdom is better than the Worlds, though it be by the World accounted folly. But I have no mind to trifle in Objections, and protract a diſcourſe to no purpoſe; Let me therefore, if you pleaſe, hear thoſe advantages which good men have above others of equal parts and opportunities.

Log. They have, 1. more *Diligence*: They mind their *way*, and the *end* of it; they *ſeek* Judgment, they make *conſcience* of improving their time and opportunities, and of receiving exhortations to Diligence and Induſtry; they are *awakened* to conſider their ways, while others in a ſpirit of ſlumber, may be ſaid to walk in their ſleep. In a word, they have a *regard to all Gods Teſtimonies*, *Pſal.* 119. And thoſe are they which can *make wiſe the ſimple.*

2. Beſides their own greater Induſtry, they more *implore divine guidance* and aſſiſtance; *Teach me thy way. Lead me in the way everlaſting. Let thy word be a lamp and a lanthorn to my paths. Eſtabliſh me by thy free ſpirit*, &c. They *cry after wiſdom, and lift up their voice for underſtanding.* Now if *Prayer*, and the anſwers of it, be ſignificant, then ſurely they have advantages above other men. And that they are ſo, conſider,

3. They have promiſes of guidance, which will not fail them, as in this *chap. v.* 5. and

many other Scriptures. Their way is taken ſpecial care of by God, *Pſa.* 1. 6. *The meek he will guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way.* Pſal. 25. 9. *Him that feareth the Lord will he teach in the way that he ſhall chuſe. v.* 12. *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him. v.* 14. [The *ſecret*] they ſhall not have only the *common* knowledg of men, but ſomething *extraordinary*. *The ſpirit of truth to guide into all truth,* Joh. 16. 13. Hereby our Saviour makes good that promiſe, *Joh.* 7. 17. *They that* do *his will, ſhall* know *of the Doctrine*; and divers other places of like import might be alledged.

Eth. Why truly, I cannot but ſay, you have ſufficiently proved this Point: Only in that of *Joh.* 16. I do not ſo well underſtand the word [*All truth*]. What! are good men Omniſcient? or is it not poſſible for a good man to err?

Leg. Yea friend, he may err; neither is he Omniſcicient: but this is certain, *All is truth* in which the Spirit guides him: If he err, it is from his not attendance to his teaching. And again, There is no truth which he needs to know (in his circumſtances), but he has a promiſe to be inſtructed therein, if he embrace the guidance of this bleſſed Spirit. Now the generality of good men in their *way* (the general courſe of their lives) may be well ſuppoſed ſo to do; and in any difficult caſe they may,

may, and doubtleſs do plead with God upon this promiſe for direction.

Eth. I thank you for this hint. There are many hard caſes in opinion and practice; and I ſee there is a way to have them reſolved, even by imploring the guidance of Gods ſpirit.

Log. Yea, and by cloſing with thoſe good men who have that ſpirits guidance. Remember that, *Zach.* 8. *We will go with you for we have heard that the Lord is with you.* Many courſes men take to be reſolved in difficulties, but ſurely this is the wiſeſt courſe they can take; for 'tis that which this Spirit, who *guides into all truth* teacheth us, not only this Scripture, *Prov.* 2. but in divers others, as hath been ſhewn. To all which, Let me here add that notable place, *Cant.* 1. 7, 8. In *v.* 7. the Church in general, (or believing-ſoul in particular) prays for direction where to find ſpiritual reſt, edification and ſatisfaction. Chriſt anſwers that prayer, *v.* 8. *If Thou knoweſt not &c.* If thou art at a loſs; if thy way be darkned by the miſts, which deceitful men, or divels do caſt before thine eyes, *Go thy ways forth by the footſteps of the flock*, and theſe will lead thee *to the ſhepherds tents.* The common track of the true ſheep will guide thee right to the true ſhepherds. What think you of this direction?

Eth. Think! I know not well what to think; for ought I ſee, this track will lead me into

Conventicles, whither I am ſure I muſt not go.

Log. The Aſſemblies of Gods people, wherever they be, are no unlawful Conventicles, whatever the world accounts, or calls them. The true Shepherds Tents are ſometimes hidden among the Thickets, in a cloudy, dark and ſtormy day; and when the true Church, in any degree, is forced into the Wilderneſs, in the mean while *the companions* (that is, falſe Teachers) may have their flocks, *in aprico campo*, in the open and flouriſhing fields, and unwary ſouls may *turn aſide to them*; but the holy Spouſe of Chriſt is ſolicitous in this matter, *v.* 7. and the bleſſed Lord is pleaſed to give us here a direction, which may keep us right when this difficulty does ariſe. Your nnderſtanding ſurely is not ſo groſs, as to think the true Church of Chriſt can be no where but in publick places, and under publick encouragement. You know ſomething, how the caſe ſtood under Heathen and Antichriſtian perſecutions.

Eth. But the caſe is otherwiſe, where is Chriſtian Magiſtrates.

Log. Yea, where the Magiſtrates, who bear the name of Chriſtian, are rightly inclined, and rightly inform'd; but it is not impoſſible for well meaning Potentates to be deceived and miſguided by ſubtil adverſaries to truth and holineſs. All the *Arrian* perſecutions

tions were under Magiſtrates, who bare the name of Chriſtian. But you and I, who are private perſons, cannot make a ſcrutiny into, or judgment upon the Councils, Deſigns, or Actions of Princes. Let it ſuffice for us to obſerve our Neighbours, who are nearer our own rank, and whom we may ſafely behold without endangering our eye-ſight. Here I am ſure we may obſerve more diſtinctly, and ſee a difference betwixt the *ways* of *good* and *bad* men, without offence. It is now (friend) a great while ſince I ſaw you, and I know not what Calling you are off; but whatever it be, mind firſt thoſe of your own profeſſion, then thoſe that fall eaſily under your obſervation of other callings; I mean, thoſe whoſe time, place, ſtate and condition of life is not at too great a diſtance from you. For inſtance: Let Countrey-men look abroad amongſt the Neighbourhood of the ſame employment, Tradeſmen among Tradeſmen, Students among Students, Women among Women, *&c.* And let not Countreymen, or young Students, or Women, *&c.* make their obſervations too far from them, among Princes, Stateſmen, Divines, *&c.* for herein they will be apt to be greatly miſtaken in the premiſes, and ſuitably get an inference far fetch't (as we ſay), which will but ſlightly conclude. I have heard ſome (and thoſe of none of the greateſt learning or quality in the world) argue in

the controverſies of Conformity, that Queen *Eliz.* of famous Memory, was no friend to Puritans; and that the arguments of Nonconformiſts were rejected by the learned King *James*; and then, that the Compilers of the Liturgy were famous Martyrs and godly Biſhops, *&c. Ergo*, I know many things are ſaid among the learned about theſe matters (which I liſt not now to recite); but truly friend, I think its beſt to let theſe great ones reſt in their honourable duſt, ſeeing there are arguments ſufficient which may be had at a nearer hand: I mean, ſuch as are drawn from the reaſon and nature of the thing, or from the opinions and practices of men, *hic & nunc*; our own time and place will give us beſt obſervation of men, and eſpecially if they are of our own degree; for ſo many circumſtances of actions will appear, that may be very material to enable us to make a right judgment, which in perſons and actions at greater diſtance, may quite avoid our notice.

Eth. I think, as you ſay, one may beſt ſee nearer hand. But now ſuppoſe I do obſerve, that the better men of my own rank and calling, do countenance your way; yet I do not ſee where the wiſdom lies in joyning with them, unleſs I have ſome other arguments; for elſe, my aſſent unto them can be but implicit, and not rational.

Leg. Yea,

Log. Yea, rational, and not implicit. I do not bid you, believe as they believe, before you know what they believe, this were indeed implicit faith; but I only bid you do as they do, *unless* you have *reason* to the *contrary*: walk in their way, and you will soon see the reason of it, yea, they will be ready to give you an account of their faith and practice. If indeed you think, you have reasons to the contrary, and so may *justly* scruple to joyn in their practice, by all means seek the removal of your scruples, before you enter upon their way that you may not go on uncomfortably, and with a doubting mind.

But certainly it is a most rational method to proceed in, for satisfaction to go, *a notiori ad ignotius*, from a thing plain and manifest, to some other thing that is more obscure and dark. Now 'tis manifest, that these men generally are sober and honest men; I am inforced to judg so by *Charity*, which *thinketh no evil*, where no evil doth appear; in the things which I plainly know, and understand, and such as are without controversie, I see they walk according to rule; therefore very probably they do so likewise in things I do not so well understand. I say, this deduction is rational, which I may illustrate by a familiar similie. I know (suppose) Physicians, which in divers cases have proceeded methodically

and ſucceſsfully, which caſes and proceſs I have well underſtood; now there happens a caſe which I do not well underſtand, nor perhaps upon their explication am able to apprehend: I ſay then, it is more rational for me to truſt theſe Phyſicians in this difficult caſe, than others whom I have frequently ſeen err in their practice, even in ſuch plain caſes which are very obvious, and eaſie to apprehend.

Eth. Pray apply your ſimilie.

Log. That's readily done: remove but the maladies from the body to the mind, and ſay, the caſes are matters of practice, and then thus it proceeds as to the difficult caſe. Where things are intricated by Sophiſtry, and arguments of practice drawn from Antiquity, Hiſtory, Original Criticiſms, and various readings, *&c.* wherein men of ſecular employment, by reaſon of their calling and educations, or young ones in reſpect of time and experience, cannot diſcreetly judg and ſatisfie themſelves, they may yet eaſily extricate their thoughts in the way that we here propoſe. They may eaſily and reaſonably ſuſpect that Religion, or way of Worſhip, or moral actions, or cuſtoms of what kind ſoever, which the *generality* of ſwearers, drunkards, ambitious, covetous, or ignorant, *&c.* do moſt approve of: and ſo on the contrary, where a *generality* of good men (who are ſuch

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in the discreet judgment of Charity) are either inclined to practice, or (with moderation of spirit) to desist from a practice: This cannot (I think) but commend that practice, or desistence (at least to serious consideration, if not) to present imitation and concurrence: The reason is, because we can easily see, not only the unblameableness, but also the usefulness of good mens conversations; this falls under every mans cognizance: And so likewise we can as easily see the immoralities of evil men to be justly reprovable. Whence common reason will dictate this argument to me; if they do either wilfully, or ignorantly miscarry in things I do so well understand, I cannot safely trust them in things I neither do comprehend, nor can well (if possibly) examine. And so on the other hand, if these men do that which falls under observation generally well; Surely if any men are to be believed in more difficult matters, these are they.

Eth. Hold a little; I know some men very unblameable in their lives, and such as of whose faithfulness I cannot reasonably doubt, who tell me, Thus say Antiquity, History, Originals, *&c.* otherwise perhaps than your good men do teach and practice. Yea again, I have heard, that *Arminius*, *Socinus*, and others, who have been accounted the broachers of Errors and Heresies, were men of very laudible

dible outward converſation. What is to be ſaid now?

Log. 'Tis now to be ſaid, that you always forget what I have often called on you to remember: And that is, that the way of good men in the Text, is not the way of ſome *particular* good, or laudible men, but ſtill to be underſtood of the τὸ πᾶν, the *generality*, elſe the example or teſtimony of ſome ſuch particular men would prove the moſt pernitious means to deceive us; yea, and the better theſe men do appear, the greater is the danger of ſeduction by them; for theſe are the men (and not lewd and ſcandalous ones) who *would deceive, if it were poſſible, the very Elect.* Only this let me deſire you to obſerve by the way, as to the matter in hand between you and me, Thoſe men of your way, that you account very good, thoſe particular perſons whom you propoſe, as not to be blamed; pray tell me, are theſe great ſticklers for the things in controverſie, or only couchers under the burthen? Have they ſuch an abhorrence to our way, as to inſtigate perſecution, encourage Informers, *&c.* or only uſe their own liberty in thoſe things wherein they have a greater latitude than their brethren?

Eth. I cannot ſay theſe eminent men, I know, are over zealous about the matters in difference.

Log. Why

Log. Why truly then, they add to our good mens teſtimony, and may be numbred amongſt them; for they alſo give in their ſuffrage but whiſperingly to thoſe things which ours do openly avouch. But ſtill remember we ſpeak of *generalities*.

Eth. But I am perſwaded, the *generality* of your people are blameable in ſome things; and you ſeem to juſtifie even the very irregularities of Profeſſors.

Log. Not at all; for (as I told you) the *way of good men* is but a *comment* on the *Rule*, and not the *Rule it ſelf*. We know the beſt men are not perfect, as the Rule is. There may be too much of pride, paſſion, earthly-mindedneſs, *&c.* in good men; herein they err out of their way; theſe are *deviations*, all their actions are not ſuitable; and if ſome particular perſons have ſpecial infirmities, remember ſtill theſe are not *their way*, nor of the *generality*.

Eth. I ſee you inſiſt much upon *generality*, but for ought I perceive, this would lead to Quakeriſm, as well as any thing elſe, for they are *generally* ſober in their converſation.

Log. Are they ſo indeed? Have you never read their railings, nor heard them reviling the moſt uſeful Miniſters, in ſuch times as they thought they ſhould not be very roughly handled? but now in that kind they can be quiet enough. In many practices, and more do-

doctrines, they manifeſtly croſs the Rule: And if there be any thing commendable in them, it is but common to others; and therefore we need not go to them for preſidents. As for the things wherein they pretend to differ (though ſome of them are matters of great moment), yet they are not ſuch high diſputes, as neeed much learning to confute them; they cannot puzzle conſcience with difficulties pretending to reaſon; they have only *Enthuſiaſm*, and a ſtrong ſelfiſh perſwaſion, which can have no rational influence on another man, unleſs it be by a kind of faſcination, and they are as the *Gallatians* were, when they forſook their teacher, *fooliſh and bewitched.* Now I would have you walk with the wiſe, and be wiſe, *Prov.* 13. 20.

Eth. Nay, ſtay a little; not too much of that. I believe many good men, who are honeſt, yet are not over wiſe.

Log. Your belief is not Divine, grounded on Scripture; for that informs you, that as much of goodneſs as they have, ſo much they have of wiſdom: Therefore we read of *the wiſdom of the juſt*, *Luke* 1. 17. 'Tis true, it is not the wiſdom of the world; but what it is, and how it differs from that, you may read 1 *Cor.* 1. 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24. and *chap.* 2. 5, 6, 7, 13.

Eth. Why are none then wiſe but they?

Log. No,

Log. No, none but they, and ſuch as have ſo much wiſdom entered into their hearts, as to incline them to come to joyn with them. Wicked men are *fools*, as the Scripture frequently teſtifies; The *companion of* ſuch *fools ſhall be deſtroyed*; he runs to his own deſtruction, and therefore is a fool too, See *Prov.* 28. 5. *Evil men underſtand not judgment, but they that ſeek the Lord underſtand all things.* Namely, all that is neceſſary for them to know. The truth is (and that may be argument to perſwade you,) *Company* is *Characteriſtical. Noſcitur è ſocio.* We may know hereby, what ſtate and condition, for the preſent, we are in; good men, if we walk in the way of good men, and ſo evil, if with evil. *Can two walk together, unleſs they be agreed? Amos* 3. 3. There is no agreement between light and darkneſs, no communion between them.

You may read it the mark of good men, 2 *Cor.* 12. 18. *walking in the ſame ſpirit.* In the ſame ſteps, *Pſal.* 1. 1. &c. And ſo alſo of wicked men. Are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. *According to the courſe of this world, Epheſ.* 2 2. When *Elihu* would charge *Job* as a wicked man (though wrongfully), he gives him this character, as a known and ſure ſign, *Job* 34. 8. *which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.* This is a point of very great con-

concern, both as to our present comfort and future happiness, and therefore I shall (if you please) a little more fully insist upon it.

Eth. Pray do as you think meet.

Log. Well then, I shall instance in divers examples of this matter, to make the thing the clearer. This is notably exemplified in the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, who though they were great persons, it does not only concern men of like condition, but even our selves, or any other men; for the greatness of the examples take not away the parity of the reason in the meanest person whosoever. Now besides the good Kings, who walked in the ways of *David* their father, we have instances enough to be enumerated in those of the wicked sort. As,

1 *King.* 15. 3. *Abijam* { walked in the way of his father *Rehoboam*, and not in the way of *David* his father.

—26. *Nadab*, { walked in the way of *Jeroboam*, who made *Israel* to sin.

—34. *Baasha*. {

2 *Kings* 8. 18. *Jehoram*——of the Kings of *Israel*, as did the house of *Ahab*.

2 *Cron.* 21. 6, 12, 13. for the daughter of *Ahab* was his wife. He followed Foreiners, not his good fathers *Jehosaphat* and *Asa*.

2 *Kings*

2 *Kings* 8. 27. *Ahazia*——of the house of *Ahab*, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, as did the house of *Ahab*, for he was the son-in Law of the house of *Ahab*.

——13. 6. *Israel*, in the days of *Jehoahaz*, departed not from the sins of the house of *Jeroboam*, but walked therein.

——11. *Jehoahaz* did the like.

——16. 3. *Ahas* did not that which was right——as did *David* his father, but walked in the ways of the Kings of *Israel*——and according to the abominations of the Heathen, whom the Lord cast out.

——17. 8. *Israel* in the days of *Hoshea*——in the statutes of the Heathen, and of the Kings of *Israel*, which *they* made (that is), such about Gods worship as he never directed.

2 *Kings* 8. 19. *Judah* also——in the statutes of *Israel*, which they made.

——22. *Israel*——in all the sins of *Jeroboam*, and departed not from them.

——21. 21, 22. *Ammon*——of his fathers——not the God of his fathers.

2 *Chron.* 22. 3. *Ahazia*——in the ways of the house of *Ahab*, for his mother was his councellour to do wickedly.

——28. 12. *Ahaz* not right, as *David*,——in the ways of the Kings of *Israel* (Forreiners), v. 22. This is that King *Ahaz*.

Now

Now from all theſe places you may ſee, how notorious ſinners are caracterized to be walkers in the ways of wicked men. Beſides, what they are here mainly cited for, there are other uſeful *corrolaries* that may be drawn from them, as, that no pattern of other people, no example of Forefathers, or Heathen, or Popiſh Predeceſſors, can plead preſcription againſt the Law of God. That young ones take care, and make conſcience about their Marriages, which elſe may hurt themſelves, and ſpoil poſterity, as in *Jehoram* and *Ahazia*. That ſtatutes of *Omri*, Kings of *Iſrael*, *&c.* bind not againſt the Laws of Heaven.

Theſe things, and more ſuch like, may be noted by the by. But the chief thing which I here intend, is to help you to judg of your ſelf, by whom you follow, accompany, or moſt approve, and imitate; and if they are none of the beſt, 'tis high time to forſake them.

Eth. What then? muſt I forſake my Father, Mother, or Anceſtors, and their advice and practice? muſt I leave the way wherein I was born and bred.

Log. If you are bred in a way not agreeable to the way of good men (as before explain'd), and by conſequence not agreeable to the Rule of Gods Word, then you muſt. Conſidering, that we muſt every one anſwer for our ſelves; and the plea of others practice,

or

or advice, will not ſtand as an excuſe in the day of Judgment, however thoſe perſons are related to us. No man muſt be call'd father on Earth, in oppoſition to our father in Heaven. Faults will be charged, notwithſtanding the *way of Anceſtors*, and perhaps may be aggravated thereby, when there is a ſeries of provocations from one generation to another, *Amos* 2. 4. *Their lies cauſed them to err, after which their fathers walked.*

Eth. But what ſhall we think of our deceaſed Anceſtors, ſuppoſing they bred us in a way, not altogether regular.

Log. Leave that to the day of Gods Revelation, and let *us* mind the work of our preſent day.

Eth. But methinks, Sir, your diſcourſe makes a ſlight buſineſs of *Antiquity*, to which not only men have generally great deference and veneration, but God himſelf alſo refers thereto: *Ask for the old paths, Jer.* 6. 16.

Log. Yea, but take the whole place together. *Stand ye in the ways* (make a ſtand), *and ſee*, go not forwards for any pretended Antiquity, but examine, and make enquiry, as in the following words, *Ask ye for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.* Old and good muſt go together. Every old way is not good, *Job* 22. 5. *Haſt thou marked the old way, which wicked men have trod-*

 den?

den? And have you marked well that Scripture? A wicked way of a generality of wicked men, may pretend to near 1300 years, to 35. Generations (for about so long was Antichrist in his height, when the Church was in the Wilderness); but *from the begining it was not so*, *Mat.* 19. 8. Go to the beginning, the oldest way, and that's the way of good men; *To the law and to the testimonies.* How long had *Israel* walked in perverse ways when God calls them by the Prophet *Malachi ch.* 4. 4. to *remember the law of Moses.* This was the way of those good fathers, who walked with God, and God with them: Ptay therefore as that most wise and holy man did, 1 *Kings* 8. 57, 58. *The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers*———*That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways*, &c. *as he commanded our fathers.* His ways are those good old ways, which the Lord commanded, to which those good old fathers gave obedience, and obtained his blessing.

Come, come, friend, leave the foolish course of a wicked world, walk not as other *Gentiles*, *Eph.* 4. 17. Leave foolish customs, and cleave to Scripture-Rule, which marks out the good mens paths. See how expres the word of God is in this point, *Lev.* 18. 3, 4. *After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; nor after the doings*

of

of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, ye ſhall not do, neither ſhall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye ſhall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances; I am the Lord your God. Add to this alſo, *Prov.* 1. from 10. to 16. which takes off the excuſe men may draw from allurement and temptation, though it be of the greateſt worldly advantage. *All precious ſubſtance, v.* 13. Yet, *if enticed, conſent thou not,* and *walk not thou in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path, v.* 15. Thus ſhould you leave the way of ungodly men, whatever be the temptation.

Eth. But I am a young man, and have a mind to know the world, and therefore am for all Societies, Companies, Communions; Hereby I think I ſhall get experience, and yet have time enough to fix my thoughts hereafter.

Log. That's more than you know; your times are in Gods hand, and not your own. But as for making experiments, it is not ſafe in Religion or Morals. Pray read with conſideration, *Prov.* 4. 14, 15. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, paſs not by it, turn from it, and paſs away.* Mark, you muſt not *enter* (to make experiments), no, nor ſo much as *come near*; and if occaſionally you do, you muſt *haſt away*; you muſt ſhun the very appearance of evil.

Eth. But does not the Scripture ſay, *Try all things, hold faſt that which is good?*

Log. Yea, try *all that needs* a Tryal. But you know already, many things to be wicked, and ſuch muſt be no further proved.

Eth. But perhaps ſome things I may only ſuſpect, and not know that they are evil.

Log. Try ſuch things (as you would try, whether fire will burn) at a convenient diſtance. The neareſt approach you can ſafely make, is ſtanding in the way of good men (as *Solomon* tryed *folly, yet acquainting his heart with wiſdom, Eccleſ.* 2. 3.) If you leave the Regiment of good men, you are within the Devils Gun-ſhot. *The wicked are like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt, which caſteth up mire and dirt, Iſa.* 57. 20. Now he were a mad man, who would plunge himſelf into it, with the hazard of drowning, only to ſee what work the ſtorm does make, a wiſe man would rather ſtay, with good company, on firm land, and obſerve it with joy and thankfulneſs, that he is free of the danger. Therefore dear friend, as you love your ſoul, keep ſtill in the way of the righteous, follow the Saints that are dead, and accompany and imitate thoſe that are alive. As for the dead Saints, now in Heaven, the Apoſtle is plain, *Heb.* 6. 11, 12. *And we deſire that every one*

of you, do ſhew the ſame diligence to the full aſſurance of hope, unto the end; That ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes. Above all examples, look to the Lord Chriſt, the Captain of our ſalvation, and leader of his people. *He that ſaith, he abideth in him* (that calleth himſelf a Chriſtian), *ought himſelf to walk, even as he walked,* 1 *John* 2. 6. And after him follow the Apoſtles, *Be ye followers of me, as I am of Chriſt,* 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. And if you think theſe, by reaſon of their extraordinary attainments, to be too far before you, there are ſome that are nearer, even thoſe that followed them: Read *Phil.* 3. 14, &c. *I preſs towards the mark, for the price,* &c. *v.* 15. *Let as many as be perfect* (i. e. ſincere) *be thus minded,* and do likewiſe; *and if in any thing you be otherwiſe minded* (i. e. if holding the head you have difference in opinions), *God ſhall reveal even this unto you, v.* 16. *Nevertheleſs whereunto we have already attained* (where the matters are clear, notwithſtanding other differences), *let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing* (let us keep cloſe to our rule, and one another, as perſons that work by the light of the ſame Candle, muſt ſit round together about it) *v* 17 *Brethren, be ye followers together of me* (together, not ſcattered, divided, or diſperſed, like Sheep without a Shepherd); *and mark them*

which walk ſo, as ye have us for an example. (Here are your nearer patterns; Chriſt was to the Apoſtles, the Apoſtles were to theſe, and theſe are to you). *v.* 18. *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the croſs of Chriſt.* And who are theſe? are they *Jews?* or *Pagans?* He need not ſo often ſay, that thoſe are enemies of the Goſpel. Who then? Surely they muſt be ſome among themſelves, making a Chriſtian profeſſion, and bearing the Chriſtian name, of whom it ſeems he had often cautioned them, as of ſuch who might, by their evil example, hurt them; and becauſe they minded not his former frequent admonitions, he now again tells them with tears, as ſeeing the danger they were in by ſuch companions, or walking in their way.

Eth. The Apoſtle ſays, *many* walk diſorderly; Does not this *many* here ſpoil your argument? for if they be Chriſtians, and thoſe not one, or a few, but *many*, that walked amiſs; Does not this ſhew, that *the many*, even of Chriſtians, are not to be followed.

Log. Not *many* (as I told you), if they walk not by the ſame Scripture-Rule. Remember 'tis not *a many*, but a *generality*, or the moſt, which I commend unto you. This generality are well expreſſed by the Churches of Chriſt, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 14 *The word* (ſays the Apoſtle,

poſtle, *v.* 13.) *wrought effectually in you: for* (*v.* 14.) *ye brethren were followers of the Churches of God, which in Judea are in Chriſt Jeſus.* In *Judea* likely *ſome* perſons, yea, perhaps *many*, might not walk according to the Rule, but you minded the *Churches* (not perſons) the body of Chriſtians there, and hereby approved your ſelves to have received benefit by the word, which many other hearers, it may be conſtant hearers thereof, have not received.

Eth. Well, perhaps hereafter I may be inclined to joyn with thoſe whom you commend unto me, but for the preſent I am for all; I have indeed a great deſire, and hope to get experience from the variety.

Log. No good experience can be gotten from evil men. And whereas you refer your joining with good men to hereafter, know that you are not maſter of one moment of future time; know alſo, that it is your preſent duty. Walk in the light while you have the light, *John* 12. 35. and follow the children of light, while they are within your view. Time may be, when (as to a particular place or perſon) theſe lights of the world may be removed. The *righteous may periſh, and no man lay it to heart; and good men be taken away from the evil to come*, upon ſuch a part of the world, when you may have few before your eyes, but wicked and miſleading examples;

when ſuch inſtructors, by a holy life, may be driven into unobſervable corners: Then will profaneneſs over-ſpread a Country, or a Neighbourhood, and you will want the way of good men to walk in.

Eth. I ſee you are very earneſt to make me a Proſelyte. Well, I ſhall conſider of what you ſay.

Leg. To Proſelyte you into a ſerious conſideration, is all that I deſign. And to help you therein, I ſhall add to what has been ſaid (as motives to quicken you), ſomething concerning the vaſt difference between the ways of good, and evil men. Pray therefore be pleaſed to conſider, and compare the *ways*, and the *end* of thoſe ways.

First, The way, and that both of good men and bad men.

1. Of Good men. 'Tis *before the Lord*, that is, ſetting the Lord always in their preſence, *Gen.* 24. 40. Thus *Abraham*'s ſervant gave account of his maſter. *And he ſaid unto me, the Lord before whom I walk, will ſend his angel with thee, and proſper thy way.* This refers to *v.* 7. *The Lord God of Heaven ſhall ſend his angel before thee.* They are before the Lord, and the Lords Angel ſhall go before them, to proſper them in their way. So *Jacob, chap.* 48. 15. *God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Iſaac did walk— bleſs the lads.* Others may be ſaid, as it were, to lurk out of his

his preſence, to creep behind covert, as *Adam's* guilt made him in Paradiſe to do. Guilt always ſhuns Gods preſence, while integrity maintains communion with him. The like is implied by *walking with God*, as *Enoch*, *Gen.* 5. 22. *After the Lord*, *Hoſ.* 11. 10. that is, as a ſervant after his maſter, *After the ſpirit*, *Rom.* 8. 1. Not the inclinations of the fleſh, but dictates and bleſſed motions of the Spirit, which are expreſſed in, and move according to the written Word. Good *Joſiah* engages himſef hereunto by Covenant, 2 *Kings* 23. 3. Of the ſame import is *Caleb* and *Joſhua's* *following God fully*, *Numb.* 14. 24. and their *following the lamb* whitherſoever he went, *Rev.* 14. 4. All which ſhews their way to be a way of univerſal obedience. Furthermore, the way of good men is *going and coming up to the mountain of the Lord*, *Iſa.* 2. 3. *Mich.* 4. 2. This expreſſion notes worſhip, and joining to his Church and people therein. They walk *in the light of the Lord*, *Iſa.* 2. 5. This notes direction, comfort, and unblameable honeſty; *as in the day* *Rom.* 13. 13. Again, they walk *in his name*, *Mich.* 4 5. It notes faith, confidence in, and glorifying of God; ſo *David* walked towards *Goliah*. This is equivalent to walking *by faith*. *Therefore we are always confident, for we walk by faith and not by ſight*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 6, 7. *In love*, *Epheſ.* 5. 2. having Chriſt for an example, which is no

ſmall

ſmall Commendation thereof. *In good works*, Epheſ. 2. 10. every ſtep of a Good man (as ſuch) is a good work, according to Gods fore-ordination; *Which he hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them.* This is to walk *in newneſs of life*, Rom. 6. 4. *In the ſpirit*, Gal. 5. 16. *according to rule*, Chap. 6. 16. *Circumſpectly*, Epheſ. 5. 15. And in the General *worthy of* (or ſuitable to) *our vocation*, Epheſ. 4. 1. *Worthy of the Lord*, Col. 1. 10. *Worthy of God*, 1 Theſſ. 2. 12. Now what think you of this way.

Eth. I cannot ſay but it is very good, if men can walk in it: But I doubt whether any now a-days do or can.

Log. That ſome have in former time, is aſſerted in divers of the Scriptures mentioned, and thoſe perſons are propoſed as examples to us (as has been ſhewn). Now to what purpoſe are Examples, if they cannot be imitated? It is true, our Copy may be much better than our Writing: But let us write after it, and we ſhall improve.

Eth. But improve we as much as we can, we ſhall never do like Scripture-Saints, who had extraordinary meaſures of the Spirit of God.

Log. If we cannot come up to them, yet 'tis very good to go after them, and we ſhall attain the *End* of *our* way, even as they have done of *theirs*. But why not come up to them?

them? Are not the ſame Precepts given to us, that were to them? And does God command us impoſſibles? Two or three Conſiderations I would commend to you, which may ſet you right in this matter.

1. Conſider, The Spirit of God was given to Scripture-Saints for divers *Ends*. One was, that they might witneſs to Divine Truths, and propagate them by Word and Writing; for this End they had extraordinary meaſures of the Spirit, which manifeſted themſelves in Gifts extraordinary, and Revelations; ſuch meaſures of the Spirit we may not expect: and this was vouchſafed to them in their *publick* capacity. There was alſo another End of giving the Spirit to them, in their *private* capacity, to guide, comfort, and enable them to walk in grace to Glory; that whileſt they preached to others, they themſelves might not become caſt-aways: Thus the Spirit is given to Saints in all Ages, and herein, and hereby the Scripture-Saints may be imitated.

2. Conſider, That Obedience and Holineſs is accounted of by God in Chriſt, not according to extent, but ſincerity; 'tis *accepted according to that a man has*. Theſe two Conſiderations will help you to ſee that we may do like Scripture-Saints; we may have Integrity even as they, and be aſſiſted by the Spirit,

rit, and accepted in Chriſt, even as they were. To theſe two, let me add a third.

3. Conſider, 'Tis the uſual policy of Satan, or the Guile of our own hearts, to perſwade us, That that thing is impoſſible, which we have no mind to addreſs unto; becauſe in matters of Duty, we would rather be thought Impotent, than Unwilling; for that the former offers to Conſcience ſomething like an excuſe, which the latter cannot pretend to.

Eth. Well, can we, or can we not come up to Scripture-Saints? I am ſatisfied, 'tis beſt to follow them ſo far as Grace ſhall enable us.

Log. You'l be better ſatisfied, if you conſider the *Dirtineſs* of the other way, the *Way of wicked men.* They are *other Gentiles*, Epheſ. 4. 17. and they take another courſe: They walk not *with*, *before*, or *after* God, but *fly from* his preſence, as *Cain* did, in guilt, horror, and contempt of him: Not *after the ſpirit, but the fleſh*; implied in that *Rom.* 8. 1. expreſſed 2 *Pet.* 2. 10. *Preſumptuous, ſelf-will'd, not afraid to ſpeak evil of Dignities*, (underſtand *Dignities*, not only reſtrictively to perſons in *Authority*, but in its whole latitude), every perſon or thing worthy to be better eſteemed; and therefore ſuch as contemn the Spiritualities of the Goſpel, Grace, Goodneſs and good men, ſuch as disfigure true

true Piety with miſhapen names and titles: Theſe, I ſay, are moſt eminently guilty of deſpiſing *Dignities*; theſe *Mockers walk after their own ungodly luſts*, Jude 18. Wicked men, inſtead of *Love*, do *follow after miſchief*, Pſal. 119. 150. they walk, not in *light*, but *darkneſs*: thus *Prov.* 2. 13. *Whoſe ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths*, v. 15. Not *in good works*, but *run to evil*, Prov. 1. 10. And this they do in following the Rout, contrary to *Exod.* 23. 2. which ſaith, *Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to do evil.* They walk not according to *Rule*, but *diſorderly*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of buſie Idlers, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 11. In a word, Good men walk *in truth*, and rejoyce their Teachers, 3 Epiſt. *John* 4. but Evil men lye, and do not the truth, while they ſay, They have fellowſhip with God, (pretend Chriſtianity), and yet walk in darkneſs.

Now, I pray, compare theſe ways, and judg which is fitter for you to walk in. Which is moſt elegible, is eaſie to determine, if mens Reaſons or Conſciences are awake: Who would walk in *darkneſs*, when he may in the *light*? In *ſtrifes* and *envyings*, as *men* and *carnal*, 1 Cor. 3. 3. When he may in the *Spirit*, and as *Saints in Love*? And ſo of the reſt. Thus have I ſet before you the Good and Evil way, of Good and Evil men: What think you of them?

Eth. I muſt think of them, as every one ſhould, that the Good way of Good men is much to be preferred.

Log. Hitherto very well; but you muſt not end in Thinking: Conviction without practice will but aggravate our faults. To move you therefore yet farther, as I have done with the *two Ways*, ſo I ſhall now propoſe to your Conſideration the *two Ends* of thoſe ways to which they directly lead. And indeed, if the Reaſon be conſiderable in the Difference of the *Ways*, it is abundantly more cogent in the Difference of the *Ends*. The *End* and Iſſue is of moſt Import in things practical, whether Divine or Moral.

Eth. That's ſure; All is well that ends well; and by the Rule of Contraries, That's ill, that ends ill.

Log. Well then, ſee the End of both put together, *Prov.* 10. 9. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh ſurely: but he that perverteth his way, ſhall be known.* (*Documento erit*) ſhall be made an Example, to warn all others from the like. Now as Safety and Deſtruction are the contrary Iſſues of Good and Bad mens Ways to *themſelves*; ſo are they likewiſe to thoſe that follow them, *Prov.* 13. 20. *He that walketh with the wiſe, ſhall be wiſe; but a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed.* Underſtand this Proverb (as all Proverbs delivered in *Antitheta's* muſt be underſtood) by ſupplying

ſupplying the one part from the other: and the meaning is plainly this: The way of Good men, is a way of Wiſdom; and thoſe that follow them in it, are wiſe, and ſhall be ſaved; but the way of Wicked men is a fooliſh way; and thoſe that accompany, or follow them therein, are fools, and (as ſuch) will run headlong to deſtruction. This in general: But to ſpeak more diſtinctly to thoſe Iſſues, ſee what the Scripture ſays of them, both *here* and *hereafter*.

1. Here Good men in their Ways have proſpered, 1 *Chron.* 11. 17. The godly perſons, who came out of the Tribes, by Gods bleſſing, *ſtrengthened the Kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam ſtrong three years, for three years they walked in the way of* (good men) *David and Solomon:* and *Chap.* 17. 3. *The Lord was with Jehoſaphat, becauſe he walked in the firſt ways of his father David.* Mark, *the firſt ways*; for though *David* was a Good man, yet ſome of his latter ways were *Deviations* from the common track of Good men; therefore his *firſt ways*, were the Exemplary ways; and in following them, *Jehoſaphat* had proſperity. *Joſiah* likewiſe walked in the Good ways of *David*, Chap. 34. 2. and that very ſteadily: He *declined neither to the right hand, neither to the left*; the Iſſue was, a reſpite of Calamites for his life;

life; his eyes ſhould not ſee the Evil, *&c.* *v.* 28. The Conditional promiſe [*If they walk before me, as thou haſt walked before me*], 1 Kings 8. 25. was urged in *Solomons* prayer, *v.* 26. and was anſwered by God, and renewed, Chap. 9. 4, 5. *If thou wilt walk as David, in integrity of heart and uprightneſs— Then I will eſtabliſh the throne*, &c. The like promiſe was ſent to *Jeroboam* by *Abijah*, Chap. 11. 38. and that upon the ſame condition.

This is ſufficient to ſhew, that Gods favour and bleſſing is towards Good men, walking in the ways of Good men: this being rendred as a ſpecial reaſon or condition thereof. Whereas on the other hand, *Samuel's* ſons were rejected for this cauſe, 1 *Sam.* 8. 1, 3, 5. *Samuel made his ſons Judges over Iſrael*, v. 1. They walked not in his ways, *v.* 3. Then the Elders of *Iſrael* came to *Samuel*, and ſaid, *v.* 5. *Behold thou art old, and thy ſons walk not in thy ways, make us a King to Judg us, like all the Nations.*

Eth. But this diſpleaſed God, as appears afterwards, and therefore it ſeems not to prove what you bring it for: It ſeems not to be an Act of God rejecting them, but of *Iſrael*, who are blamed for it.

Log. They offended God as well as *Iſrael*, for *they turned aſide after lucre, took bribes, and perverted judgment*, v. 4. Therefore God was

was diſpleaſed with *Iſrael*; not for rejecting them, who left the way of Good men, but for chuſing the way of Evil men themſelves; they would be *like all the Nations*, and were not content with the *Theocracy* that was among them, God himſelf governing them by Prophets. But there are other Scriptures which (I think) will ſcarce admit of ſuch an exception; ſuch as *Iſa.* 8. 11, 12. *The Lord ſpake thus to me with a ſtrong hand, and inſtructed me, That I ſhould not walk in the way of this* (evil) *people, ſaying, Say ye not a confederacy to all them to whom this people ſhall ſay a confederacy; neither fear ye their fear.* This Rule, if you obſerve, *The Lord ſhall be to you a ſanctuary:* but if not, then *a ſtumbling-ſtone, a rock of offence, a gin, and a ſnare*, v. 14. whereby they *ſhall ſtumble, and fall, and be broken, and ſnared and taken*, v. 15.

The account that God gives of his Judgments upon *Iſrael*, *Judg.* 2. 17. was (among other), That *they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the Commandments of the Lord: but they did not ſo.* Note here both the *Rule* (*Gods Commandments*) and the *Comment* thereon, *Their fathers walk*; which ſeparated from the Rule, had not been authentick: for *v.* 19. they had their fathers leading them to Idolatry; whom they not only followed, but did out-

run; they *corrupted themſelves more than their fathers:* for this *Gods anger was hot againſt them*, v. 20. Therefore among other Judgments, he left wicked examples among them, *and before them the Nations which Joſhua left*, v. 21. *That through them* (ſaith he) *I may prove Iſrael, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein as their* (godly) *fathers did keep it, or not:* That is, ſeeing they have left the way of good men, I'le farther try them, and clear my Juſtice, in leaving bad examples before them; they have ſinn'd themſelves into this danger. Let it now appear whether they will follow their good Fathers, or theſe wicked Nations.

To conclude this matter: All the Examples before-mentioned of Wicked men, Characteriſed by following wicked men, fell under Gods ſore diſpleaſure, and were unproſperous; only then was ſome favour ſhewed to *Abijam*, 1 *Kings* 15. 4. But it was expreſly not for his ſake: *Neverthelefs* (though he might expect no ſuch thing) *for Davids ſake did the Lord give him a Lamp in Jeruſalem, to ſet up his ſon after him, and to eſtabliſh Jeruſalem.* 'Twas for *David*'s and *Jeruſalem*'s ſake: As for all the reſt before-mentioned, Calamity did befal them.

Eth. Yet they Reigned, and for ſome time were in a flouriſhing ſtate: Yea, does not the

the Scripture generally declare, that Affliction and trouble is the Lot of Good men, and proſperity the portion of the Wicked? Do not Preachers commonly comfort againſt this? yea the common experience of mankind has made it a Proverb, *The honeſter man, the worſe luck.* How then do you ſay, the way of Wicked men *ends in Calamity?*

Log. Hold friend, you are not yet come to the *End.* Many times indeed God does juſtly blaſt them here, and execute upon them his Scripture-threats in Temporal Calamities; and that he does not always ſo, it muſt be aſcribed to his goodneſs and long-ſuffering: But the great deciſion is in reſpect of *ſpiritual* and *eternal* Mercies and Judgments.

1. In ſpirituals; ſee the difference, in that *Cant.* 1. 7. tell where thou *feedeſt*, where thou *cauſeſt to lye down*, and that *at noon*, in the parching time of the day, in the midſt of outward troubles: The flock of Chriſt, and ſuch as ſeek them, find them, and keep with them, have from his Paſtoral care as their peculiar portion, inward refreſhment and edification. Whereas on the other hand, thoſe that *walk as other Gentiles*, Epheſ. 4. 18. *have their underſtanding darkned, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of*

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their heart, paſt feeling, given over to luſciouſneſs, &c.

Eth. Yea, that is, the *Gentiles* themſelves are ſo; 'tis not ſaid of thoſe that imitate them.

Log. Thoſe that imitate them, are like to be involved in the ſame miſery; elſe why does the Apoſtle labour to deter them from *walking*, as they do by ſetting forth their calamitous, ſpiritual eſtate? as if he had ſaid, This way of the other *Gentiles*, you ſee where it ends and iſſues, therefore take heed that you follow them not therein.

Eth. It ſeems rather where their way began; for it was from their Ignorance.

Log. Nay, I ſay ſtill, where it *ended*; for the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *Judicial* hardneſs, blindneſs, ignorance and wickedneſs, to which they were *given over*. But ſuppoſe it were not from this *giving over* by the righteous Judgment of God; yet there is argument enough to diſſwade from walking after them, or as they walked, drawn from the nature of the thing it ſelf: For what life or warmth can we hope to get, or keep, amongſt dead carcaſſes? What flouriſhing or fruitfulneſs amongſt the weeds? Therefore certainly, as to ſpirituals, following ſuch, or being amongſt them, can produce nothing but deadneſs and flatneſs; That's all the end and iſſue we can expect in ſuch a way, and from ſuch company.

pany. And thus much as to Spirituals. Now,

2. As to Eternals. The way of Evil men is the broad way, the high road leading to deſtruction. In that *Phil.* 3. wherein the Apoſtle exhorts to walk after good Examples (of which before), and Cautions them of ſome that *walked diſorderly*; to confirm his argument, he adds *v.* 19. *Whoſe end is deſtruction.* Wicked men, when they hear or read ſuch diſcourſe, are apt to put far away the evil day; to think of *hereafter*, they count not their *preſent* concern. But let them read with trembling, *Mat.* 24. 48, &c. *My Lord* (ſays the evil ſervant in his heart) *delayeth his coming*; and thereupon makes bold to *begin to ſmite his fellow-ſervants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. To begin*; Mark it young ones, who are in a youthful vanity, but entring your Names in the Devils Colledge, amongſt evil company. *The Lord of that ſervant ſhall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of*; it may be, before he is many days or hours older: then when he reads this Scripture, *And ſhall cut him aſunder*, ſeparate ſoul and body by death, and after death comes Judgment; *and ſhall appoint him his portion with the Hypocrites:* Where is that, but Hell? for, *there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth:* They ſhall keep their evil

company to eternity, but they ſhall be no comfort to them. This *weeping and gnaſhing of teeth* is alſo threatned, *Mat.* 8. 12. to the poſterity of *Abraham*, *Iſraelites* by name, and children of the Kingdom, *But. v.* 11. to his true ſeed, *who* (as they are deſcribed *Rom.* 4. 12.) *are not of the circumciſion only, but alſo walk in the ſteps of the faith of our father Abraham*; It is promiſed, that they *ſhall ſit down* (and have the remaing Reſt after their walk) *with Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven.* Theſe good mens way, is the narrow way, that leads directly to Heaven and Happineſs, *Acts* 2. 47. *The Lord added to the Church daily* (even to this day he brings in to joyn with his Church and people) *ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.* Salvation is the end of their way. Such *go from ſtrength to ſtrength*, troop to troop, company to company, *Pſal.* 84. 7. *Till they all appear before God in Zion:* That is, the multitudes of *Iſrael* from all quarters coming to the Temple-ſervice, met, and joyned with other companies, going the ſame way; which was a true Embleme of the Chriſtian Church, and a type of the Kingdom of Heaven both in Grace and Glory.

I ſhall cloſe up this part of our diſcourſe, with minding you of that Great Sorting of men at the laſt day, *Mat.* 25. 31, &c. *When Chriſt*

Chriſt comes in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his glory: This is a ſolemn appearance, and it is good ſometimes to repreſent it to our thoughts. Then *v.* 32. *Before him ſhall be gathered all nations, and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats:* and v. 33. *he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left.* Then *v.* 34. *ſhall the King ſay to them on the right hand, come ye bleſſed,* &c. *to thoſe on the left hand.* V. 41. *Go ye curſed,* &c. Now tell me, friend, ſeriouſly, on which hand, and among which company would you willingly appear in that great day?

Eth. Lord, on thy right hand, for thy mercie s ſake.

Log. And can you expect to be ſet among the ſheep there; and will not here walk by the footſteps of the flock? Oh, friend, take heed of being too like *Balaam*, *Numb* 23 10. who could cry out, *O let me dye the death of the Righteous, and let my laſt end be like his.* And why not the *middle way*, as well as the *laſt end?* or how can theſe poſſibly be ſeparated? why did he not go out from the midſt of the Heathen, and preſent himſelf to the Congregation of *Iſrael*, ſeeing he ſaw *his God with him, and heard the ſhout of a King amongſt them?* v. 21. Could he not Love, as well as behold the *goodly Tents of Jacob*, and the

Tabernacles of Iſrael? chap. 24. 5. *His eyes were now open,* v. 3. enough to ſee an excellency in the *laſt end:* 'Tis a marvel that he could not ſee what was excellent nearer hand; But why ſhould we wonder at any Abſurdities in men, whom God leaves to themſelves, and luſts?

Eth. I confeſs your diſcourſe comes very cloſe; and I cannot well tell what to reply. Yet methinks there is one thing with which I am apt a little to ſatisfie my ſelf; Namely, That I know how to take care of my ſelf; and though in the midſt of evil men, I may be (as the freſh fiſh in the ſalt Sea) untainted with their vices.

Log. Dear friend, Never preſume too far in that reſpect: For Example is very prevalent. Beſides, the guilt that is uſually contracted by unwarrantable preſence, and ſinful ſilence; there is ordinarily much filth and pollution effectually conveyed. Sin is every way Contagious, but no way more than by preſidents. We are apt to learn by Examples, rather than Rules: This is manifeſt both in good and bad.

For Good Examples, take a Scripture or two: Firſt that of *Nehemiah* 5. 8, 9, 10, &c. where *Nehemiah* diſſwaded the covetous *Jews* from their oppreſſion and unjuſt Uſuries: He choſe as the apteſt *medium* to ſet before them better Examples; for when he had told them

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their fault, *v.* 7. he ſhews them that he and his did on the contrary, *v.* 9. *We after our ability have redeemed our brethren, and will you ſell them?* He ſays not this by way of oſtentation, but in proſecution of his holy deſign to reclaim them; to make his word ſink the deeper, by his practice conformable thereunto. This had its effect, firſt to convince and ſilence them; *They held their peace, and found nothing to anſwer: I and my brethren, and my ſervants might exact* as well as you, but have not, *v.* 10. Then ſaid they, *v.* 12. *We will reſtore*, &c. Afterwards farther to enlarge their bowels, he declares his abſtinence and hoſpitality, *v.* 14. 17. and by theſe means, though they were hard to be perſwaded, yet he prevails upon them. The other Inſtance (not to mention more) is that of our Bleſſed Saviour, who having ſeen the Ambition of *Zebedees* children, and heard the murmuring of the reſt, he took this prevalent way to convince and reform them, *John* 13. 15. He being *Lord* and *Maſter*, v. 14. *waſhes their feet*, ſaying, Ye ought alſo (yea much more) ſo to do; *For* (v. 15.) *I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do* (the means of Love) *as I have done to you.* And thus much for the force of *good Example.*

But *bad examples* are much more prevalent, becauſe of our corrupt natural inclinations: Theſe are as Tinder, apt readily to catch fire

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at the leaſt ſpark, or as Wood-buildings in a City, which quickly take the flame from their Neighbours, and then more vehemently burn themſelves, and ſpread it farther to others, *Jer.* 16. 11, 12. Their fathers gave them bad examples, and they did not only as bad, but worſe, *Your fathers have forſaken me*, *v.* 11. and *ye have done worſe than your fathers*, *v.* 12. So *Ezek.* 16. 47. The ſiſters of *Judah*, *Samaria*, and *Sodom*, gave bad examples; and what's the iſſue? *Thou haſt not walked after their ways, but as if that were a very little thing, thou waſt corrupted in all thy ways more than they.* I ſhall add only that cautionary exhortation of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 4. 11. *Let us labour therefore to enter into reſt, leſt any man fall after the ſame example of unbelief.* As if he had ſaid, bad examples will make work for you, and you muſt labour hard to row againſt that ſtream.

Eth. This, I confeſs, is confirmed by daily experience; but alas! what ſhall we do? the diſſoluteneſs of the times is ſuch, that we can hardly look beſide thoſe evil patterns.

Log. Therefore be ſure, you need not look after them, or ſeek them: rather fix the eye of your mind on thoſe few good ones, which you may find, if you will. But if you muſt need behold thoſe evil ones, then make them to your ſelf, as God has made them, *Examples of Caution* to avod their ſin and miſery. *He*

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that perverteth his way (in that *Prov.* 10.9 before mentioned) *ſhall be known* (ſo we read it, but it is rendred by the Learned) *Documento erit*, ſhall be made an inſtructing Example. Look on ſuch as Buoys or Sea-marks, to avoid, not as Way-marks to follow; as Murtherers are hung in chains, that men may take warning from them. So behold them freely and fully, even from end to end. Thus the *Pſalmiſt* looked at wicked men, when enquiring in the Temple, *he ſaw their end*, Pſal. 73. 17. Thus the deſtroyed *Iſraelites* are propoſed by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 10. 6, &c. *Now theſe things were our Examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they alſo luſted:* Examples, not to be followed in *Idolatry*, v. 7. *Fornication*, v. 8. *Tempting God*, v. 9. *Murmuring*, v. 10. *Now all theſe things* (their deſtructions) *hapned to them for Examples, and were written for our admonition*, v. 11. So *Sodom* and *Gomorrha were made Examples unto thoſe that after ſhould live ungodly*, 2 Pet. 2. 6. ſet forth for Examples (ſays *Jude*, v. 7.) ſuffering the Torments of Eternal fire.

Eth. I am ſatisfied by your diſcourſe in general, concerning the ways of Good and Evil men. It cannot be denied that beſt men are beſt company, and their Examples beſt to be imitated; every one will grant this. But the difficulty (I think) lyes in applying this general Doctrine to particular caſes.

Log.

Log. The Caſes to which it may be applied, are either *common*, or *ſpecial*. By common caſes, I mean ſuch as for which we have plain directions in Scripture; and in applying it to theſe, there is no great difficulty: For Inſtance; Praying in families, Catechiſing children, diligent obſervation of the Sabbath, frequent reading and hearing the word of God, conſtant diligence, and earlineſs in attending Acts of worſhip, publick or family Cloſet-duties, and ſuch like. Theſe are the ways of Good men, which are ſcarce queſtioned by any, though ſincerely practiſed by few. Now here it would be well, if we did conſider, That as we deſire to be numbred among Good men, both *here* in our own Conſciences, and in the Reputation of men, as alſo hereafter in Chriſts Judgment; ſo our Care ſhould be to follow them in thoſe and ſuch like unqueſtionable duties. This of the *common* caſes. But there are of *ſpecial* caſes a multitude not to be enumerated; However it may be worth while to conſider a few of them, and Reaſon and Conſcience may dictate the reſt as they do occur.

Eth. I pray do, for I deſire to have a more diſtinct apprehenſion of your notion.

Log. Well then, we will conſider thoſe ſpecial caſes, to be ſuch, as either in their nature (*in ſpecie*) are indifferent, but are vitiated (*in Individuo*) by their Circumſtances; or elſe

elſe the actions are indeed irregular in themſelves, but either by the obſcurity and abſtruſeneſs of the matter or by the very common practice of men they become diſputable; and ſomething on either hand may be ſaid, whereby at leaſt men that have a corrupt bias will frame ſome palliations and excuſes; and ſo in ſome ſort ſatisfie themſelves, if they cannot others. All ſuch actions may be reduced to three Heads, according to the Apoſtles diſtribution of our duties. 1. Such as refer to, and deflect from *Righteouſneſs* (to *others*). 2. *Soberneſs* (as to our *ſelves*): and 3. *Godlineſs*, or Religion (with reſpect to *God*).

Eth. I like your diſtribution well; Pray let's have a few Inſtances of each Head.

Log. You ſhall. And firſt as to *Righteouſneſs*, which concerns our Neighbour, whoſe life, name, eſtate and comfort, we are to preſerve and promote (with Juſtice) as much as lyes in our power; the *ground-work* of which, is to *Love him as our ſelves*; and the *meaſure* of integrity therein, is to *do to others, as we would* (upon ſerious conſideration) *have them do unto us.*

Now what Gods Command is in this particular, we know is very plain: yet we ſee men generally walk not according to this Rule. This therefore will ſuggeſt to us Caſes of Conſcience, or Practical queſtions, which you may thus form.

I ſee

I ſee 'tis a common thing in the world, to ſeek *Revenge*; in *Law-ſuits* to *vex*; in *Bargains*, by many colluding words, to *gain as much as poſſible* to ones ſelf, without regard to the *damage of others*; to ſhift off a *loſs* from ones ſelf, *not caring where it falls*; to make *advantages* of others *neceſſity*; to *exact* what the *Law* gives, in *Rents*, *Intereſts*, &c. without minding the Providential circumſtances that have befal'n another; to make *diſcourſes* of *perſons*, and their *actions*, without a *call*; and with undue *reflections*, which unjuſtly damage their *repute*; to be *moroſe*, *unkind*, *reſerv'd*, vexing and troubling others, or ſuch like unneighbourly, uncivil, and unſociable things; to mind only, or chiefly *private intereſt*, without a due reſpect to the publick; to be little concern'd, and without tender *compaſſion* in the *Calamities* of others; to be *headdy*, *tetchy* and *quarrelſome*, apt to *give* and *take* offence. I ſee theſe things, and many more of this nature, are uſual; and I have now an *opportunity*, or *provocation* to act in one or more of theſe ways; I am notably *tempted* to it, and could *colour* the buſineſs well enough, if any ſhould be offended thereat.

But, now put the Queſtion, Is this *the way of Good men?* do the *generality* of Saints uſe thus to do? I find indeed preſidents enough in the *world*, but do I find a competent number

ber in the *Church* of true and *real Chriſtians* to bear me out, or give countenance to my actions? The Apoſtle anſwers to one particular, 1 *Cor.* 11. 6. (and it may be applied to all the reſt), *If any man be contentious, we have no ſuch cuſtom, nor the Churches of God.*

Eth. I would we could ſay ſo in our days.

Log. You may if you pleaſe, and that with truth.

Eth. Say you ſo? I am ſure I know many profeſſors, ſuch as you would account Good men, that have in many of the particulars, you have mentioned, given great offence.

Log. What? is it their *common* practice?

Eth. I cannot ſay ſo; but yet of *ſome* I may.

Now, friend, you are running off again from the ſcope of our Argument, even to that of which I have ſo often cautioned you; that is, to *ſome actions*, and *ſome* particular *perſons*; when, you know, we ſpeak of the *generality*, and thoſe ſearced from the bran: I mean, look ever to the *beſt* of the *beſt*, and that's properly *the way of the Church*, or *Good men*; for if it be the beſt man that tranſgreſſes that's his *deviation*, not *way*, as is before noted. And as for thoſe who make a common practice of things, *doubtful* or *ſinful*, they are ſcarce to be reckoned among the *Good men*, at leaſt not among the *Exemplary ones*; be ſure not

not in those particulars where the *precept* gives no warrant or countenance to the *president*.

Eth. I apprehend you. Passing therefore this interruption, pray proceed in what you were saying.

Log. The second rank of Cases appertain to *Soberness*, which doth respect *our selves*, and requires a Regularity, and due moderation in *thoughts*, *words* and *actions*. As for *Thoughts*, and the inward *frame*, or *agitations* of the mind, we can here take no farther notice of them, than as to their productions obvious to outward observation; such Insobrieties are a *vehemence of passions*, and a *bent of mind* to pursue ones own inclinations, without respect to the sober advice of others. As for *Words*, a delight in *much talk* is unsober, especially of ones own *exploits* and *abilities*, as also of *neighbours infirmities* and *miscarriages*; so is foolish *jesting*, which is not convenient, or necessary to honest cheerfulness, but either meer *froth* proceeding from levity, or *injurious* in grieving other mens spirits, or wounding their reputations, proceeding from a rude insolence, and pride of heart. As for *Actions*, we shall only here touch at those wherein men do unsoberly delight: As (for instance) in *Recreations* immoderation, as to expence of *time*; *Rudeness* and boisterousness, so as to do mischief in sport; playing at *Lot-games*, such as *Dice* (the pure Lot), *Cards* or *Tables* (the mixt

mixt Lot), delighting in the Antipathie, or miſeries brought on the poor creatures by mans ſin, and under which the Creation groans, as *Cock-matches*, *Horſe-Races*, *Bulls* or *Bear-baitings*, &c. to *playing*, or *wagering* at any game *for money*, or any thing of value; which one is loth ſo *often*, and in ſuch *meaſure* to impart to the poor for ſupply of their neceſſities, as to venture at play to ſatisfie a wretched *gaming humour*: So delighting in, and frequenting of, the vain and vicious Scenical Interludes, Commedies, Masks Balls, mix'd Dancings, Cajoling and Dalliance with Women, *&c.* All of which things, if they are not abſolutely ſinful, yet are at leaſt queſtionable, and the grave Sentiments of able Divines are againſt them. Add to theſe, the inordinacy about Meats, Drinks, and Sleep; wherein the Senſualiſts are much ingaged, not only in a ravenous voracity, but more uſually in an extravagant curioſity about Hogues and Guſts, and making too much buſineſs about theſe ſmall matters, and proviſion for the fleſh by theſe, with long and lazy lying in bed. Add alſo (to draw to an end) the Inſobriety of outward carriage, Habits and behaviours, in a *ſtateline ſs* of gate, *difficulty* of acceſs, *lofty looks*; in *habits* a fond *niceneſs* and curioſity; extravagance in *faſhions*, in imitation of vain or profane perſons; exceſs in length criſping and powdering of *Hair*; needleſs *Perewigs*, and

apiſh *Bulls* and *Towers*; Garments not formed or worn ſo much with reſpect to the ſervice of the body, as to gratifie a vain and fantaſtick humour.

Theſe, and many more ſuch like, are common Caſes amongſt men. But are they *the way of Good men?* are the moſt conſcientious Chriſtians approvers, or common practiſers therein?

Eth. Truly friend many, if not moſt of the things you mention, on this head, are pleaded for with divers Reaſons, by thoſe who are concerned therein.

Log. No doubt of it; I know it well, or elſe I had not now mentioned them as ſpecial Caſes. But their Reaſons (I think) being weighed, will be found light (which may be done in due time), yea is already done in the Writings of many ſober Caſuiſts. However if theſe diſcourſes do not ſufficiently convince, enlighten, or incline, be the defect in the Reaſonings on the one hand, or the Apprehenſions, or corrupt affections on the other; yet, as to *preſent practice*, here is a dead weight (more conſiderable than the 26 in Parliament) *the way of Good men*; which will more than counterballance thoſe prejudices, or render the things in queſtion *doubtful* at leaſt, and ſo to be forborn. *In dubiis tutior eſt pars negantis.*

Eth. Well, let me hear you out: Your third Head of Caſes was *Religion*; What ſay you of that?

Log.

Log. I say, In *Religion* and *Godliness*, men have need more especially to mind *the way of Good men*, whether in *Doctrine*, *Discipline* or *Worship*; it is most like they are least mistaken, (upon the grounds before discoursed), and so most exemplary.

If in *Doctrines* a diversity of opinions and questions do arise; as about the *Morality* of the *Sabbath*; the *Power* of Mans *Freewill*; the certainty and universality of Gods Decrees; the excluding all mens Works from their Justification; of the Authority of the Apocrypha-books; and the Canonical Scriptures perfection, in directing Discipline and Worship, *&c.*

If about *Discipline* there be Controversies, as concerning the Churches power to Institute Rites and Ceremonies; about the Orders of Ministers, or divine Right of Episcopacy; about the Obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant, as to that branch which concerns Reformation of Church government; of Episcopal Confirmation, and sole Ordination; of Officials, Excommunication, and the matters about which it is commonly exercised; of promiscuous Communion in Sacraments; of Commutations of Penance, with fine and imprisonments about meer Ecclesiastical matters; of Ministers Subscriptions and Canonical Obedience, of Books of Visitation, and Oaths upon them, imposed at the rate they are; of

Patrons preſentation, and buying advouſons; as moſt expedient or inexpedient for the Church; And many more ſuch like Opinions and Practices. Ask now your own Concience what you think the generality of ſober Chriſtians do hold and act in theſe points?

So for *Worſhip*, there are divers modes; ſome are for unvaried forms in private, and ſtinted Liturgies in publick; others are for conceived Prayers, according to gifts of utterance, the Spirits aſſiſtance, the preſent occaſion and frame of heart; Some are for the eſtabliſhed Liturgie, and the modes thereof derived from the Papacy; others are utterly diſſatisfied therein. Some are for Cathedral Furniture and Muſick, under the notion of greater Decency; others think that the moſt ſimple, plain and edifying, is the moſt decent, and do practice accordingly. About places and times of Worſhip, you know is great difference between thoſe who value Worſhip, according to Conſecration or Dedication of the places and times of mans device wherein it is performed; and thoſe who make no matter of it. About Catechizing in the old, ſhort and obſcure way; or in others of a latter make. About preaching, the faſhion of it Declamatory, or by Doctrines and Uſes; the frequency of it, once a month, or a day, or both parts of the Lords day, beſides ſome other weekly opportunities; the Spirit of it, cold and

and formal; or vehement and earneſt. Alſo about hearing Sermons, is no ſmall difference among the people; as whether the fine, ſmooth, elegant and oratorical; or the plain, ſerious, hearty, and ſpiritual. Whether in publick with defect of ſome conſiderable advantages in a reaſonable Judgment; or in private (ſuppoſing a diſturbed ſtate of the Church) ſuch, as by whom experience tells us, we may probably receive more Edification. In a word, Whether *Conformity* or Nonconformity in the whole extent of it, or of a middle Latitude, and indifference to both.

In all theſe Caſes, and many more of like nature, I think, without involving our ſelves in intricate, and (to ſome perſons) inſuperable, diſputes, the ſafeſt way for preſent practice (till Diſſatisfactions do ariſe) is to follow the footſteps of the Flock, and joyn our ſelves to the generality of thoſe whom we are ſatisfied for the moſt part are the better men; and that appearing by ſuch things, as we plainly know without any Diſputation.

Eth. Well, but ſuppoſe there be ſtill a great Diſſatisfaction in ſome notable things, wherein ſuch a generality, as you mention, have, and do ſtill miſcarry.

Leg. Then deſiſt, and make ſerious enquiry.

Eth. I ſhall ſo, and therefore do deſire your Information in order to ſatisfaction concerning thoſe people (whom I know you mean)

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How comes it to pass, that the Generality of them at this time oppose the Laws of the Land, and in the late times of Rebellion closed with the chief Magistrates enemies? This disregard of Magistracy is a great stumbling-block, that neither I, nor others (who have otherwise good thoughts of them) are able to get over.

Log. Magistracy they *Generally* own as an Ordinance of God, and profess, and yield obedience to it, according to Gods Word; either *actively complying* with what they judge not repugnant to the will of God, or *Passively submitting* where they are not satisfied.

Eth. Why, must every private Person judge of the Magistrates Decrees?

Log. Yea, with relation to his own practice, else he will *obey only for fear* of Penalty, and not *for Conscience-sake*, as he is required to do, *Rom.* 13. 5. For *Conscience* being the practical Judgment of a man concerning himself and his Actions, as that Judgment is subjected to the Judgment of God in his Word) I cannot see how a man can do any thing conscienciously, unless he bring his Actions to that divine Rule, and try all Rules that are brought him to guide his work, by this most Royal Standard. *Blind obedience* is fitter for a Brute than a Man; It will never render an Action thankworthy, if the matter of it be good; nor excusable if it be evil. If therefore men (of what

what state soever they be) do require any thing, which we soberly and humbly judge unagreeable to the Word of God, we may, yea, we must appeal, as the Apostles did, to the Throne of God in mens Consciences, yea, even of those who require it, *Whether it be Right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than to God, judge ye.* Acts 4. 18, 19.

Eth. But the things, wherein they comply not, are *Indifferent*, and in the Magistrates power to command *not Sinful* as you suppose.

Log. Yea, that is still the grand Question, which has been long argued by wiser men than you or I. If you read Ver. 18. you will find men pretending Authority in a thing that was really not indifferent, *They commanded them not to speak at all, or teach in the Name of Jesus.* Now if to forbear, or do, be either sinful *in its self*, or sinful *unto us* by our doubts and dissatisfaction about it, after all lawful means of Information, you'l grant (I hope) that doing, or not doing what is forbidden or required by men, out of respect to God and his Command, is no disrespect to the Magistrate and his. And hitherto you shall find they will reduce every part of their Nonconformity. They 'l tell you they worship in places and mods distinct from the publique Establishment, for that they can do no otherwise without sin. Of their sincerity in this Profession, the most of men seem now to be satisfied;

tisfied; for that ſcarce any one is willing to give them trouble therein, but thoſe that are manifeſtly the worſt of men.

Eth. I muſt confeſs, *Informers* have got an ugly Name, and thoſe who are otherwiſe active, hear none of the beſt; therefore let the preſent matters paſs. But ſtill about the *former Times* I am utterly diſſatisfied.

Log. If you had lived in thoſe days, and been of years of Diſcretion, you would better have underſtood the ſtate of the Controverſie, than now (after an Act of *Oblivion*) I can inform you. Yet ſomething you may gueſs, if you pleaſe, by an impartial reading of the Hiſtories and Diſcourſes (*Pro* and *Con*) of theſe Times, concerning the Powers of Parliaments, *&c.*

Eth. What Books or Hiſtories would you adviſe me to read?

Log. That I may tell you ſome other time, upon better Conſiderations, for preſent I ſhall only ſay, that the Writings of any one Party, is not a ſufficient evidence to quiet a mans thoughts, without comparing with the others. And that the moſt odious things that are now imputed to them, were never approved by the Generality of them.

Eth. I gueſs at your meaning; I ſhall urge you no further in this matter. But yet methinks I have a mind to read ſomething about thoſe Affairs, if you would hint to me ſome ſober Writer.

Log.

Log. If you would needs have me name an Author, I shall name one, who was no ways concern'd in our broyls, and that is *David Pareus* his Comment on *Rom.* 13. with his Son *Philips* Vindication of his Father, both written before our Troubles, and in a remote Countrey. There you will find a grave and unintereſſed diſquiſition into the nature of Magiſtracy, both ſupream and ſubordinate; and of a Conſciencious ſubjection thereunto.

But friend, let me once again call you back from looking too far off for Examples, and to mind rather the ſerious Chriſtians, among whom you live; for of Perſons and Actions in Remoter Times and places, you may be much miſtaken. Theſe of our preſent age you may ſee immediately and clearly; thoſe further off, but through a glaſs, which colours according to its own Tincture.

Eth. There is ſomething in what you ſay. Suppoſing then I am content to mind the neareſt Patterns, and willing to walk in the way of Good Men; what advice would you give me how I may conveniently get into that way; and comfortably walk on therein?

Log. I ſhall direct you as well as I can; and therefore,

1. *Study their ways* as they are *deſcribed* in the *Word*, and obſerve their ways as *exemplified* in their *Lives* and Converſations; As alſo make diligent Enquiry into the Reaſon and

and Conſcience of them; becauſe they are to be *Preſidents* and *no more*; not Rules (as was ſaid) but *Comments* on the Rule. Now the Study and Obſervation of ſuch mens ways in matter of doubt, is commended to us by the Regularity of their Practice in things unqueſtionable.

2. In order hereunto, *Accompany their Perſons*, ſo that you may ſay as *David*, Pſal. 119. 63. *Companion I am to all thoſe that fear the Lord.* To *All*; not one or a few, who perhaps may be ſtragling from their Company and their way, but follow the *All*, the Flock, if you will keep their path. The Prudent and Pious Method he took, when he was ſetling reſolutions of holineſs, and *to behave himſelf wiſely in a perfect way*, Pſal. 101. 2. was firſt to Abdicate the wicked. *I will ſet no wicked thing before mine eyes*, &c. Verſ. 3, 4, 5. and then get Good Men only to be about him: *Mine eyes ſhall be upon the faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he ſhall ſerve me.* Ver. 6. Now you will do like him, the more chearful, if you can get your heart to eſteem them as he did, *Pſal.* 16. 3. *The Saints therefore in the Earth, the Excellent in whom is all my delight.* Saints indeed are not only the Glorious and joyous Society of Heaven, but even in this World, Saints (as ſuch) are the moſt excel-

cellent, and delightful Company.

3. Lay ſeriouſly to heart, or rather *lay up* in a good heart, the *Motives* before mentioned from the Excellency of the *Way* and *End*: Apply them to Conſcience; work them upon your Spirit; ſay in your Retirements, What ſhall I do now? Shall I chuſe the way of the Perverſe? Dare I run the Risk with them, whom I ſee running to perdition? Shall I venture at deſtruction by treading on the plank that others have ſlipt from into the bottomleſs Pit? Would I not be among the ſheep at laſt? Such exerciſes of your thoughts upon this matter, will ſettle your mind in a worthy choice.

4. And that you may not be unſetled again, *Arm* againſt *Temptations*, *Alluring*, *Entangling*, and *Diſcouraging*.

I. *Alluring*. The way of wicked men is a fair and broad Way, and many walk therein; but 'tis to Deſtruction. 'Tis indeed a ſmooth way, but it is out of the way to Happineſs. There may be many a green handſom Lane on the right and left hand of our Road to Heaven, and theſe may tempt us to ſtrike into them; but the Spirit of God calls us back again. So it is promiſed, *Iſa.* 30. 21. *Thine Ears ſhall hear a word behind thee, ſaying, This is the Way, walk in it, when ye turn to the right hand and to the left.*

II. *En-*

II. *Entangling*, by Objections and ſpecious Arguments, ſuch as indulge not Senſuality, but obtend Reaſon; as ſuppoſe the Multitude are otherwiſe inclined, and more eyes ſee more then fewer: *We know that this Sect is every where ſpoken againſt*, Acts 28. 22. Great Names may be mentioned to over-bear any reply; perhaps men in Authority, Rulers; So they, *John* 7. 48. *Have any of the Rulers or of the Phariſees believed on him?* Which was to confound, not to convince thoſe young beginners in Chriſtianity. The like Queſtion is put to our Saviour, *Mark* 7. 5. *Why walk not thy Diſciples according to the Tradition of the Elders? Elders*, the graver, and wiſer ſort; Art thou and thine wiſer than our Forefathers, who practiſed theſe things, and did commend them to Poſterity? But all this prevailed nothing with Chriſt and his Real Chriſtians: 'Twas then but a dull Argument, and is now more blunted by ſo frequent and impertinent uſe.

III. *Diſcouraging* Temptations are ſuch as was the *Stir* and *Tumult* made by *Demetrius* and his Fellows, *Acts* 19. 23. *No ſmall ſtir about that* (the Chriſtian) *Way*. The like Storm was expected, *Acts* 21. 21, 22. *They are inform'd* (ſay the Brethren to *Paul*) *that thou walkeſt contrary to the Cuſtoms; What is it therefore?* (What is it to be looked for?) *The Multitude muſt needs come together*

gether (in a Tumult and Uproar) *when they hear that thou art come.* True Chriſtianity is Nick-named a *Sect*, *and every where ſpoken againſt*, in Acts 28. 22. above noted. Perhaps the Occaſion of Reproaching might be taken from the Infirmities of Good Men; or much more from the abominable Practices of Hypocrites. *Many ſhall follow their Pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of Truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of*, 2 Pet. 2. 2. Now all this, and much more, which both Scripture and Experience gives us notice of, will be diſcouraging; unleſs before-hand we have ſet down, and caſt up the coſt of the Towers building. Indeed all theſe Temptations may be even here repulſed by an underſtanding heart, and an honeſt Reſolution, through Grace. But they will be utterly ſilenced, when the *end* of the two ways ſhall be ſeen; the *broad Way* leading to Deſtruction, and the *narrow Way* leading unto Life. And thus much for your *own Endeavours* to put you and keep you in the *Good Way*, but in, with, and after all, be ſure that

IV. You *Pray* earneſtly That as God has guided Good Men to walk in *his* Ways, ſo he would direct and enable you to walk in *theirs*. So *Solomon* prayed, 1 *King.* 8. 57, 58, *The Lord our God be with us as he was with our Fathers, to encline our Hearts to walk in all his ways which he commanded our Fathers.*

Thu

Thus he prays for the People, and for himself to the same purpose, 2 *Chron.* 6. 16, 17. where having in Ver. 16. mentioned the Promise of God to *David* concerning his Posterity, upon Condition, That *thy Children take heed to their way to walk in my Law, as thou hast walked before me*: He adds Ver. 17. *Now then let thy Word be verified*, &c. Verified in both respects; 'tis his *Amen Optionis*; as if he had said, O that God would grant that it may be so; That I, for my part, may through his Grace perform the Condition, and walk in the Good Way of God, after my good Father *David*; so I might regularly expect that God on his part should perform his Promise.

These are the Directions I can at present think of, in the use whereof I hope you may be able well to improve your good Examples, and *walk wisely in a perfect Way*. So is the Way of Good Men call'd in *Psal.* 102. 2.

Eth. Perfect Way! Surely the best men have their Imperfection: Therefore I see not how the Way of Good may be rightly call'd a Perfect Way.

Leg. Their *Way* may be called *Perfect* as their *Persons* in the Text are called *Righteous*, which I shewed you before was not a *Legal* calling them so, but *Evangelical*. Their Way as perscribed by *God*, is *absolutely* perfect; as Practised

Practiced by *them*, is *ſincerely* ſo. And it were to be wiſhed, That all who are ſincerely *Perfect* would be *like minded* with the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 3. 13, 14, 15. to *reach forth to the things that are before, and preſs toward the mark.* That is, be more and more eminently holy, ſo would they both *Credit the Good Way*, and *Edifie* thoſe who have their eye upon it.

Eth. You ſay very right, They have need indeed to look well to their Ways, whoſe Ways are made Exemplary: Or otherwiſe, ſuch as I who may be entring into their Society and imitation, may chance to ſtumble in the Threſhold, and ſoon forſake them again.

Log. I am glad to perceive a little of your good Inclination; I hope you will meet with no ſuch dangerous blocks; only (Dear friend) be entreated charitably to over-look Defects; and imitate only that which is Good.

Ethicus. God grant I may.

Logicus. Amen.

FINIS.